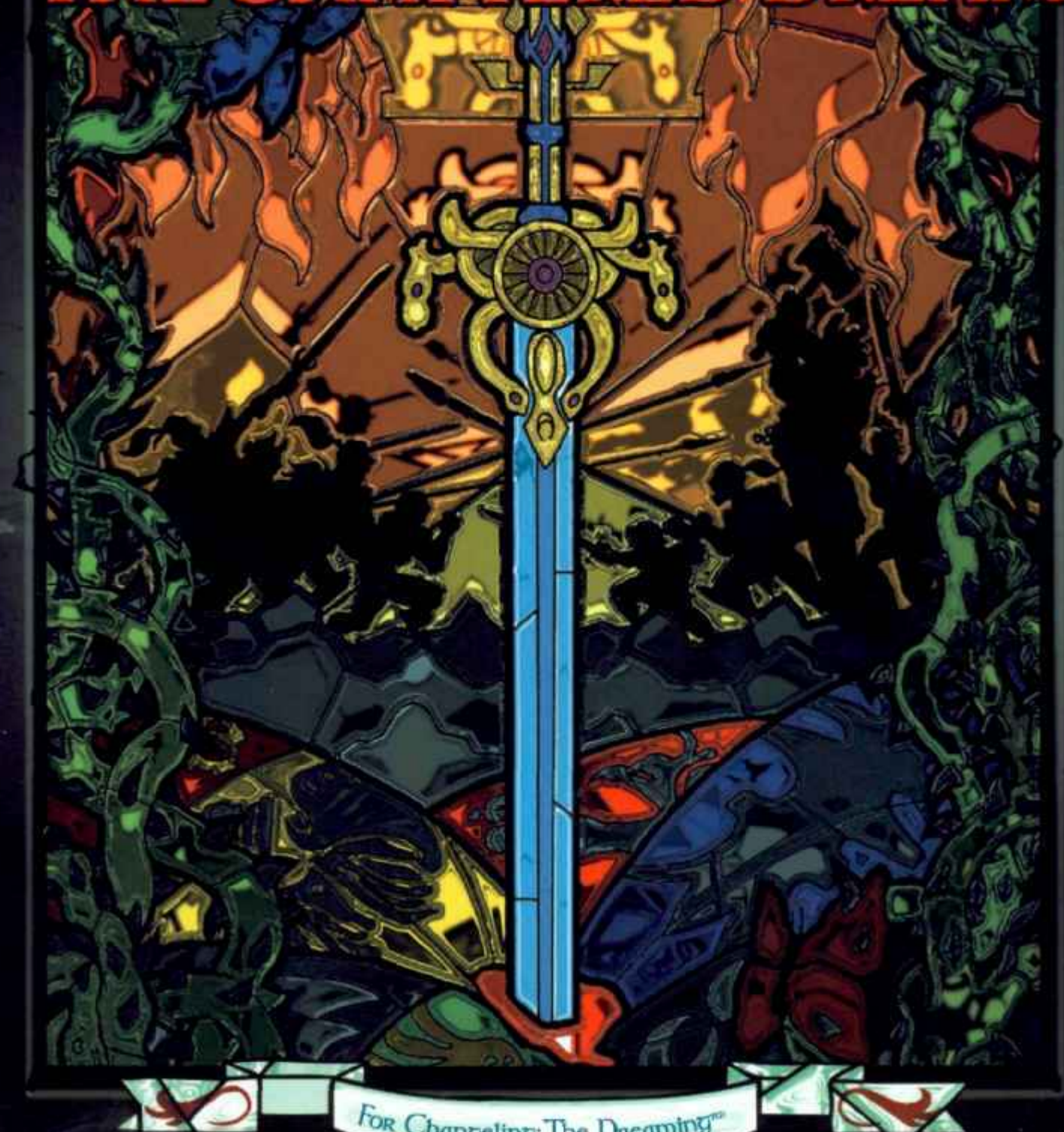


WAR IN CONCORDIA

THE SHATTERED DREAM™



For Changeling: The Dreaming™

WAR IN CONCORDIA™

THE SHATTERED DREAM



by Jackie Cassada and Nicky Rea

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Author's Dedication

From Jackie

To the memory of my mother, Paula Sanchez Cassada, 1923-2000, whose courage and persistence has inspired me throughout my life. Vaya con Dios, mi mama y mi corazon.

From Nicky

To Mike Tinney, Fred Yelk, Aileen Miles and the other folks at Arthaus for their patience and support. Thanks, folks! Your belief means a lot to us.

From Jackie and Nicky both

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PEACEMAKER

by Nicky Rea

Shadows crawled down the walls between the towering buildings, devouring the light, creating deep pools of gloom in the alleyways that stretched before the old man. *One place as good as another*, he thought mirthlessly, eyeing the human detritus that marked their boundaries with overflowing garbage bins and soggy cardboard boxes. Dull, defeated and feral eyes stared back at him as he staggered past, seeking some spot to spend yet another night cold, alone, outcast. The sour smell of cheap whiskey and the acrid reek of urine followed him, punctuated by the crackle of discarded wrappers and crunch of broken glass underfoot. Passing a section of dark window, oddly unbroken in the sea of things cast off and unwanted, he caught a ghost of his ragged reflection. Face too thin, straggly beard and unkempt hair, eyes pooled into blackness and unknown depths by the shadows. Not a face he recognized, yet he knew it was his. He pulled the thin protection of his filthy raincoat tighter around himself, wishing he had gloves or some way to make a fire. His frosty breath plumed out ahead of him, and he thought longingly of the bowl of soup he'd devoured at the homeless shelter the night—no, two nights—before. *Should have stayed there or stolen a blanket. Just too damn*

honest, he winced. *It's a death sentence in there. Too many broken people; too many broken dreams . . .*

In his wanderings he turned corners randomly, searching for an empty doorway or a cul-de-sac where he might curl up out of the wind and nod into restless sleep, untroubled by other homeless souls or the gangs attracted to the sport of beating the helpless. *At least the shelter folk gave me a name. Niall. Something to call myself besides "street bum."*

He laughed bitterly and thought, *Something besides "Hey, you, move along. We don't want you on our street."* Dimly, as if spying upon someone else's memories, he recalled a war, a battle, the feeling of . . . what? Fear? Anger? Sadness, perhaps. Yet the picture slid into a misty haze, too unstructured for him to make sense of what he saw. *I was younger then, he thought, and more resilient.* He stood another moment, trying to force himself to recall lost details, to remember who he was. Finally, he bowed his head, his shoulders slumped and he surrendered again to the gray opacity that was his past. *It doesn't matter anyway, there's nothing better for any of us in this world.* He stopped uncertainly, wondering what he meant by that thought. *For any of who?*

He'd almost passed the alley when he heard a whimpering cry of pain. Even his foggy brain recognized the sound of a child in trouble.

"Who's there?" he demanded, lack of water and a touch of unease roughening his voice. He heard the sound of a shaky, indrawn breath, then silence answered him. Shaking his head at his own capacity for stupidity and fearing an attack at any moment, Niall shuffled down the dark alleyway, feeling his way along the wall until he reached the area where he thought the child might be hiding. "Come on out," he said. "I won't hurt you." *Yeah, that would certainly convince me if some filthy street bum had me trapped back here, he thought.* "Are you okay, kid?"

For answer he felt a small hand tug on his sleeve, a hand that held out something that caught just the tiniest sparkle from the streetlight at the end of the alley. "Here, mister," a young voice—probably a boy, Niall surmised—offered, "it's all I got. Take it." The child pressed the bauble into his hand. Incongruously, the child giggled as Niall bent closer to see what the child thought of as a payoff. "I enchant thee, stranger!" the child's voice piped, sounding gleeful. "Now you have to help me get away from them."

Niall's world turned sideways as lights and colors exploded inside his head, sending him to his knees. Odd bits of dreamlike memory stirred and whirled as he tried to find his balance. He felt that he had changed somehow, grown taller perhaps or taken on some new power he didn't understand. The truth of his existence remained frustratingly elusive. Hardly daring, he opened his hand to see the child's marble lying in it, a marble that glinted and shone with the Glamour infused within it.

He just had the strength and presence of mind to firmly grasp the child and clasp him to his chest. Stumbling to his feet, Niall moved toward the lighted end of the alleyway, carrying the child in his arms, and got his first good look at what he held. The child's dark, curly hair covered his head and goatlike legs. His green-brown eyes held first mischief, then fear as he gazed at Niall. *A satyr!* The word came to Niall from deep within, cresting and flowing into his thoughts like an ocean swell. *I know what he is!* he marveled, even as the rest of his usually quiescent brain took in the blood on the child's flank and shoulder, noting the gashes there.

"No!" screamed the childling. "No, let me go, lord. Don't kill me!" He kicked out with his good leg and almost connected with Niall's elbow—the kick would have broken the arm had it landed. He thrashed in Niall's arms, trying to free himself from the older man's grasp.

"Stop that," Niall said, not with anger, but firmly. He gave the childling a stern look. "No one is going to kill you. But you may die if

nobody takes care of those wounds. What happened to you?" Gently, he set the child down near the streetlight, turning him to look more closely at the cut on his shoulder. "Here, sit down and let me see what I can do. What's your name?"

The young satyr looked up at him, distrust written plainly in his small body's refusal to relax. Niall pulled a flat bottle from his pocket and unscrewed the top. He looked at the inch or so of whiskey left in the bottom, then sighed and poured the liquid over each of the child's wounds. The boy gasped but bore his primitive doctoring. Reassured that the child wouldn't bolt if he let him go, Niall reached underneath his raincoat, tugging at an area of his shirt that still looked vaguely clean. Ripping the cloth free, he looped it around the child's wounded shoulder and pressed it into the oozing wound. He did the same for the leg wound.

Slowly, the childling seemed to lose his fear and finally whispered, "Ronaly. My name is Ronaly. You aren't like the others, are you?"

"I don't know," Niall answered carefully. "What others?"

"The ones who're after me, the sidhe."

"That would be us!" A new voice intruded, a voice of silken culture tinged with irony and threat.

The child jumped, panic warring with anger as he shouted, "Why don't you just leave me alone? I hate you! I hate you! You all deserve to die!"

Niall turned and saw the most beautiful creatures he'd ever seen. No, *I've seen others like this before*, he mused, *but where?* Taller than humans, with long, thick hair; fabulous jeweled clothing; and bright, compelling eyes, the three sidhe males lounged at ease a few feet away from where he crouched. He sensed their amusement yet knew they sought the child for more than sport. Slowly, he stood to face them, shielding the boy behind him.

"What do you want?" he asked, trying to assume an air of command he didn't feel. He eyed the slender swords each sidhe carried in a jeweled scabbard hung at his side. Now he knew where the boy's wounds had come from.

"Stand aside, traitor, and perhaps we'll let you live," replied the one who had first spoken. Niall assumed he was the leader of the group.

"What are we waiting for?" asked an arrogant-looking, blond Niall identified as second-in-command. "Look at him. He's nothing but a burnt-out old grump. He doesn't even have a weapon," he said to the spokesman. "Just take the childling and leave this one to rot. I can smell the whiskey on him from here! He'll forget all this in an hour."

Ronaly tugged at Niall's sleeve. "Please, don't let them take me. They'll kill me or make me a slave again. You're a sidhe, too. Can't you fight them?"

"Can't you fight them?" The blond sidhe's voice mocked the satyr's words, twisting them into a whining parody. "Give up, boy. This old rummy won't fight to save anything but his whiskey bottle. He's hardly even a sidhe anymore." He turned his gaze on Niall, raking him with his eyes and sneering in contempt. Then he faced the child again and scoffed, "Besides, since when did the nobility bother themselves with commoner scum like you?" He returned his attention to Niall. "We'd loan you a sword, old grump, but you've probably forgotten how to use it, if you ever knew."

"Take the boy!" the leader ordered, speaking to his companions.

"No," Niall spoke quietly. "Give me the sword. If I win, the boy goes free; if you win, well, you must decide what path to follow then."

The second sidhe snorted, "Not likely. You're outnumbered. We don't need to fight you at all. Now move or I'll run you through."

Niall felt the smooth marble lying in the palm of his hand. He could feel the Glamour stored within it, Glamour that had returned him to some sense of himself. It had not, however, forced him to rescue the satyr child. He didn't

know why he championed the childling, it was just something he had to do. But no one was forcing him. Caution and time spent on the street looking out for number one argued for him to give up and walk away. What was this boy to him?

The trio of sidhe moved closer, seeing his hesitation. Hardly feeling it, yet surprised at its fragility, Niall crushed the marble, feeling Glamour welling up within him. And from some source deep inside his muddled consciousness, he drew forth words he hadn't known he knew, directing them to the leader. "By the power of the Dreaming, I invoke the ancient rules of honorable combat. Let us cross blades one to one, forswearing knavery and following the customs of our kind to first blood, which shall decide the issue."

The leader smiled slightly, almost unbelieving, then took a sword from his third follower and tossed it to Niall. "So be it! Know that you battle Justeridan Ap Ailil," he replied. "Let it begin."

The young sidhe leapt forward even as he finished speaking, almost catching Niall off guard. The older man brought the blade up just in time to parry, then launched his own attack, surprising both his opponent and himself. The younger man laughed as he slipped out of range of Niall's flashing blade.

"So, you can fight after all," the wilder said. "I doubt you can last long, though. Swordplay takes conditioning, and you haven't got the wind for it." Justeridan thrust forward suddenly, nearly impaling Niall before the older sidhe could recover. Niall realized the brash young sidhe was right. If he were to have a chance to win, he'd have to go full out and hope to overpower the wilder before his own strength gave out. Quickly, he made a feint toward an overhead blow, switching to an undercut midway. His opponent met that attack, then drove him back two steps. Again Niall parried, then stepped sideways and brought his sword sweeping in to make a quick cut on the younger man's arm. Simultaneously, Niall felt the sting as his opponent flicked a light wound across his wrist.

Niall drew his sword back, panting heavily. The young sidhe eyed him with a combination of annoyance and amusement.

"A hit," Niall noted.

"A hit. For both," Justeridan admitted, then smiled like a predator sensing helpless prey. "You're done, graybeard. You'll never get another touch. *En garde!*" With that he swept his sword outward, forcing Niall to jump backward to avoid the whipping blade. Niall could feel his breath wheezing in his lungs and throat as their deadly dance continued. His arms and legs felt leaden with fatigue. His time on the streets had weakened him considerably, leaving him ill suited to wage battle, especially with a younger, stronger foe. He felt himself slowing and knew it was only a matter of time until he failed to parry quickly enough. With that knowledge came determination.

I will not be defeated, he promised himself. His world shrank to one opponent, one battle. Everything outside the flashing blades disappeared from his consciousness, and he felt his body responding without having to think. Not realizing he did so, he grinned with such feral exuberance that the younger sidhe was momentarily thrown off guard, stumbling backward to avoid a sudden thrust from Niall's weapon.

It couldn't last. Too many cold, sleepless nights, too much cheap whiskey took its toll. Niall's rasping breath became a fire in his lungs. Each inhalation seared him inside; each breath expelled left him weakened and shaking. He felt on the verge of collapse.

Fool! he raged inwardly. *Who do you think you are? You can't beat this foe.* Even as he formulated the traitorous thoughts, his body moved to press the attack, unwilling—or unable—to give up.

Niall smelled his own stale sweat and legacy of poor food, no sleep and few opportunities to clean himself or his clothing. In truth, he thought the stench more the result of shattered dreams and lost hopes than any physical cause. *I've sunk as low as I can go*, he mourned.

As the Ailil's sword carved the air less than a finger's breadth from Niall's left eye, the older sidhe realized he was losing focus along with consciousness. The unequal battle was almost at an end.

No! Niall refused to surrender. Something buried deep within his innermost soul sprang to life, snarling its denial of defeat. *I will not be overcome*, this new raging being inside him asserted. *I will not!* The angered part of him took over, forcing Niall to even greater effort. This inner self moved his leaden legs, brought his arm up to parry another blow, countered with a blistering array of feint, attack, riposte and attack again as Niall's muscles screamed in protest.

Suddenly, his opponent fell back, staring in astonishment at the blood that sluggishly welled from a cut on his sword hand. Barely realizing the fight was over, Niall almost failed to pull his next thrust, which would have pierced the other sidhe's heart. Gasping, Niall dropped the sword and leaned over, hands on knees, desperately sucking in breath after breath.

For a long moment, he heard nothing but his own pained breathing. The silence tugged at him, prickling his senses. Street life had taught him to trust his instincts, and they told him something was amiss. He raised his head, looked beyond his opponent, and saw the satyr child slowly topple over, eyes glazing in death as the blond second-in-command grimly wiped the boy's blood from the knife with which he'd cut the child's throat. A cold iron knife, Niall knew, and he shivered with dread though he couldn't remember why.

Screaming his outrage, Niall recovered the sword and leapt toward the blond wilder. Justeridan stepped between them.

"Enough, old man," he said. His eyes sought and found Niall's, and his strong hands held the weakened elder in place. "It's done. You're just going to get yourself killed or undone if you pursue this. I don't condone what Elisar did, but there's no point now. You fought well, but conserve your strength. You'd never win another battle, especially against a Balor. You're shaking."

"With rage. With disgust," Niall spat. "What is happening here? Why do you speak of honorable battle, then murder children? We are—" his clouded mind sought words he barely recalled—"changelings. We are of a kind. If this is what it is to be a changeling, I'd prefer to be just a man, a drunkard, a street bum." Niall ran out of words and slumped in defeated sorrow. "Just go away," he whispered, throwing down the borrowed sword and moving to the dead child. "You've got what you came for, so go."

Paying no more heed to the trio, Niall knelt painfully, then sat on the cold, blood-soaked sidewalk and cradled Ronaly in his arms. He felt the tiny remaining grains of the child's Glamour-filled marble in the palm of his hand. Tears ran down his seamed cheeks, mingling with weeks of ingrained dirt and old sweat and straggling into his unkempt beard.

The other sidhe stood uncertainly for a few moments as the old man rocked the child's lifeless body. Elisar half-drew the iron knife, raised an inquiring eyebrow toward Justeridan. The Ailil shook his head.

"He's no threat. If we leave him alone he'll probably forget what he is in a few hours—if the police don't arrest him for murder first." Shrugging, the blond noble sheathed the knife as the third sidhe retrieved his sword, which lay near Niall and the dead satyr boy.

"We don't need either of their kind anyway," Elisar sneered. "A sidhe who's forgotten his nobility or that commoner scum."

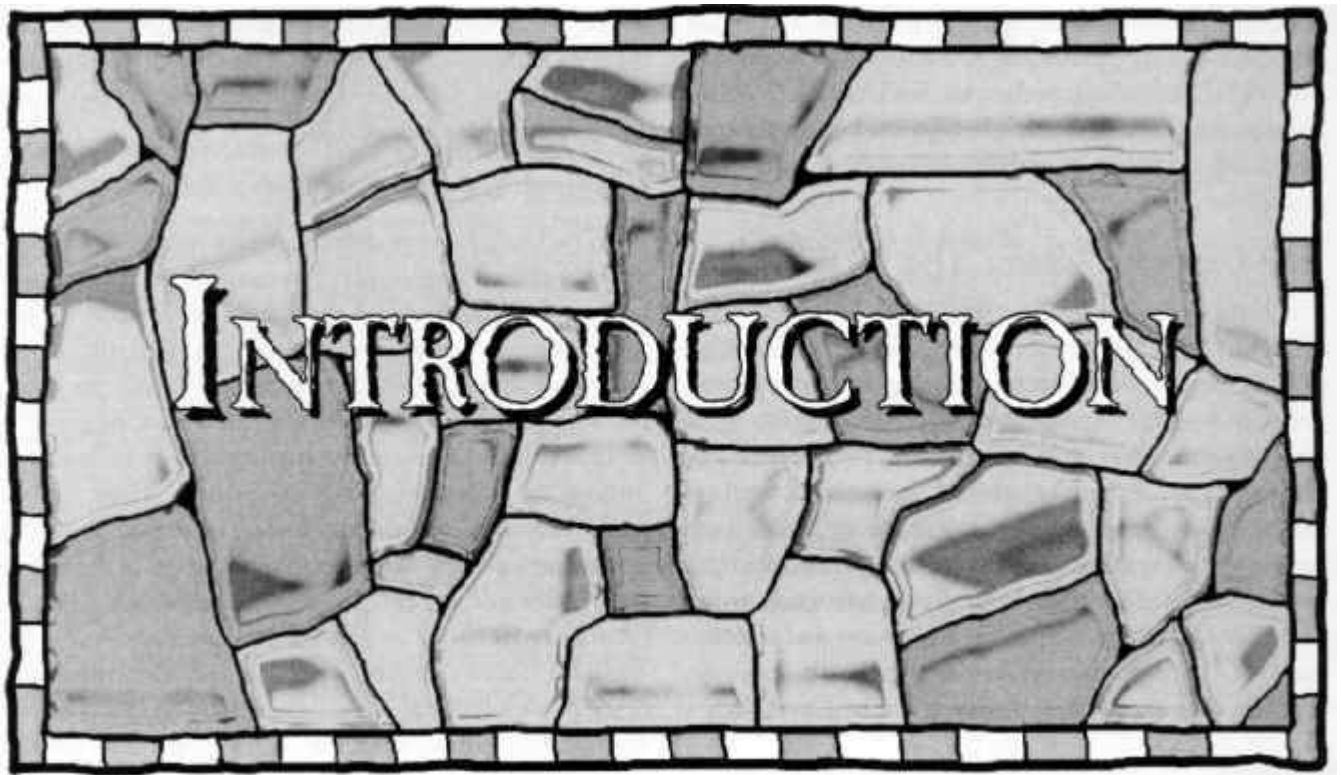
"He isn't the one who has forgotten the meaning of nobility," Justeridan commented, glaring darkly at his subordinate. "Let's go."

Long after the sidhe had left, trailing their tainted beauty like gossamer, Niall remained holding the child. Head bent, he sat as if made of ice, feeling the chill penetrating his bones, leeching through his inadequate raincoat, clutching at his heart. The child lay in a pool of congealed blood, dark eyes staring into eternity, curls fluttering slightly in the biting wind. Slowly, the

old man smoothed the boy's hair, closed the eyes. The child's satyr legs wavered in and out of Niall's vision, first furred, then jeans-clad. He realized he was losing touch with his true self, his fae self. Momentarily, he sagged with relief. These strange beings, their hatreds, their passions, their wars, would not be his responsibility, his problem. He could return to whiskey-soaked oblivion and forget it, douse the pain of this brief meeting and wander down all the empty days remaining to him, free of obligations.

He looked at the child's still face, sighed. *But, I'm no one, Niall thought. What difference can I make?* Slowly, he eased out from under the child's body, knees and aching back creaking in protest. He arranged Ronaly's body to reflect a peace he did not himself feel. Niall forced himself to see the childling's furred legs, the tiny horns. *But I will do all I can, he promised silently. Not to wage war, but to bring peace among those who should not be enemies. I may not know who I was, but I know who I must become—the Peacemaker.* He gazed down at Ronaly a final time, felt again the dust of the childling's marble on his palms. *I will not forget again. I've slept too long and winter is here, but I vow to you, child, if it takes my dying breath, I will see that spring and peace return.*





*The line, it is drawn, the curse, it is cast.
The slow ones now will later be fast
As the present now will later be past.
The order is rapidly fading.
And the first one now will later be last,
For the times, they are a-changing.*
—Bob Dylan, "The Times, They Are A-Changing"

Dreams die hard. The greatest dream, the one that encompasses a kingdom—or a concord of kingdoms—lingers longest, even when its edges fray and the idea that lies at its core erodes. Surrounded by rumor, greed and despair, the dream of Concordia has survived through a year and a half of uncertainty and growing discontent. Now that dream surrenders to a darker vision as the twin shadows of civil war and revolution emerge from the shattered ruins of the Parliament of Dreams.

What steps lead a land from peace to war? Some see a gradual process of disruption and discontent, while others locate one moment in time that marks the dividing line. For the fae, the transition from a Kingdom of Concordia ruled by a just and compassionate ruler—a king for all Kithain—to the nightmare realm of Discordia comes slowly, seeping into the veins of changeling soci-

ety like a slow-acting poison. The tremors of discord begin in the halls of Tara-Nar and spread outward from the Parliament of Dreams to the commoner freeholds of the realm. The throne lies empty. "Who will fill it?" the nobles ask. "Who needs it?" the commoners respond. And therein lies the tale.

The State of Disunion

The Kingdom of Concordia represents the overpowering dream of one individual, David Ardry. Now that the high king no longer sustains that dream, the union of noble and commoner fae dissipates into elusive fragments that flow like quicksilver, defying all attempts to keep the dream together. The feudal system that makes up the basis of fae society and underpins the hierarchy of Concordia depends on ties of loyalty from lower to higher

levels of authority and responsibility. High King David's absence alone might not erode the chain of command that holds Concordia together, but the lack of a clear line of succession provides no anchor for the realm—no one person to hold the fealty of the nobles or the loyalty of the commoners.

The Upper Crust: The Nobles

Without the leadership that David Ardry provided, the sidhe have lost the overriding sense of unity that linked members of different houses to a common purpose. The problems surrounding the succession have caused a three-way split among the members of the Shining Host. To make matters worse, old rivalries among houses have reemerged as the High Lords each seek to advance their own house during this uncertain period. While most sidhe hope that a successor to the throne of Concordia will assert her power and stabilize the realm, a few noble fae actually prefer the freedom from the restraints imposed upon them by David's laws.

Below the Salt: The Commoners

Commoners, too, hold varied positions with regard to the lack of a High King. Although David Ardry cherished the commoner fae and made certain of their representation in the Parliament of Dreams as a means to ensure their rights, many commoners feel that the Parliament did not fulfill its intent. To them, the concept of representative government has degenerated into a forum for bickering and delay with no real power to affect the lives of the fae. Many commoners see the High King's absence as a chance to start over—with all the implications contained in the dream of a new beginning. Not a few view the idea of radical change as both necessary and desirable and recognize that the moment has arrived to put their desires into action.

Outside Looking In: The Unseelie Court

Unseelie fae have a simpler take on the state of affairs in Concordia. The empty throne represents to them a golden opportunity to reassert their claims to power in fae society. Unseelie nobles covet the throne for themselves, while commoners see the chance to do away with rulers altogether, in the true "tradition" of Discordian goals. For the fae of the Shadow Court, the disappearance and assumed death of the High King follows the ancient tradition of the ritual sacrifice of the king that signifies the transfer of power between Courts. Since the Resur-

gence, the Seelie Court has held sway without challenge from its Unseelie counterpart. The Shadow Court believes that this defiance of tradition deserves redress—and payback time has arrived.

Other Views

The Gallain have differing opinions on the breakdown of changeling society. The nunnehi have no reason to mourn the collapse of the dream of Concordia. For them, the unrest signals the possibility of regaining the lands and sacred places they once held before the European fae ousted them from their rightful hunting grounds and townships. Likewise, the Inanimae have little vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Their ties to nature and their own enigmatic ways lead them to see the upcoming war as just another manifestation of the inevitable coming of Winter. They abide, and which side they take, if any, remains an unanswered question. As for the Thallain, these creatures of chaos and nightmare embrace any kind of upheaval—especially the kind of disruption that comes with war. And then there are the newly arrived Denizens. Their motives and actions may tip the balance for one side or another, depending on who gets to them first.

Mood

The dream of war evokes a fractured kaleidoscope of moods. Changelings raised on tales of legendary heroes—of knights and warriors battling for honor and duty and right—feel a martial stirring in their blood as the call to arms rings forth. Excitement is the order of the day, and fae schooled to war anticipate the coming battles with the eagerness of soldiers whose time has come. Fear also permeates the atmosphere of Concordia as order devolves into chaos. The grumps who still remember the Accordance War know the horrors that lie ahead: the suffering and carnage, the ravaging of the fae spirit, the cruel dreams that take tangible shape on the battlefield. Uncertainty plays a part in the mood of Concordia. The vacancy at the top of the heap leaves a wide-open field for contenders for the throne. In addition, many changelings feel that the High King's absence sounds a clarion call for more radical changes in rulership—or nonrulership. Freeholds that once stood as bastions of security and stability now find themselves under siege, while nobles question the loyalty of commoners they once trusted. Discord severs ties between commoner and noble, divides houses and kith and creates distrust among groups that once stood upon common ground.

Theme

War in Concordia emphasizes a number of themes. Underlying the breakdown of order and stability lies the mystic connection between the ruler and the land. Without a leader to give strength and cohesion to the world of the fae in Concordia, the realm crumbles into fractious parts. Old enmities resurface and new battle lines emerge in heretofore peaceful places. The "concord" that lay at Concordia's center revolved around the personality and charismatic leadership of David Ardry. His absence makes the tenuous nature of the accord between commoners and nobles all too clear. The High King represented the hope for cooperation and sharing of power among all the fae. Without him, that hope has disintegrated. The land lies leaderless.

The struggle between personal gain and the common good forms another motif. While peace brings profit and prosperity, war often increases the potential for advancement and power. Opportunists from all ranks of the fae

see their chance to gain something from war—freeholds, titles and fame (or infamy). Idealists lay their principles on the line and find themselves forced to question the commitment they hold to their beliefs. Those who talk revolution now face the necessity of living up to their bold words.

The mystique of "war" as opposed to the gut-level reality of violent struggle adds a third thematic strain to War in Concordia. While noble combat may bring out the best in honorable warriors, wars rarely revolve around honor. The object of war is victory, at any cost and by any means. The conflict between maintaining the image of glorious combat while coming face to face with the dirty business of slaughter, whether of the fae essence or of the mortal body, provides a constant challenge to warriors and civilians alike. In modern war, there are no civilians—only victims.



Deja Vu: The Accordance War Revisited

With the first stirrings of rebellion and the breakdown of the nobles-dominated power structure, many Kithain feel a sick sense of familiarity. Veterans of the Accordance War, most of them grumps in the winter of their fae lives, experience a certain chill that comes from knowing firsthand the nightmares that lie ahead. To a few of these hardened survivors, the outbreak of open conflict comes as nothing new. The Accordance War, to their minds, never really ended. King David's compromise—and the resulting Kingdom of Concordia—merely sidestepped the real problems caused by the Resurgence. The old grudges remain. The sense of injustice visited upon the commoners by the return of the sidhe resurfaces. Old wounds reopen, bleeding fresh and raw with unhealed anger and frustration. This, the veterans whisper, is nothing new.

Younger changelings know of the Accordance War only from the stories they have heard and the legends that have arisen out of that conflict. But they, too, recognize the inevitability of the conflict. Commoner wilders and many astute childlings live with the constant reminder that they fall short of "nobility." Many of them instinctively disdain the sidhe, though they secretly fear their power. Even those who hold the High King in high regard acknowledge that without his leadership, they have become targets for the arrogance and ambition of the sidhe nobility. For these commoners, war seems the only course of action.

Sidhe wilders, likewise, treat commoners with a combination of wary suspicion or outright condescension. The lessons they have learned from their elders tell them that commoners are inherently inferior, lesser beings dependent on the wisdom of the sidhe to lead and direct them. Now that their buffer, David Ardry, has vanished from the scene, the sidhe must confront their vassals directly, and they don't like what they see. They sense the unrest among the commoner fae and take steps to make certain that the rabble doesn't rise up against them.

Of course, this state of affairs doesn't hold true for many nobles and commoners. Over the years since the Accordance War, strong bonds of friendship and, in some cases, love have developed in unlikely places. Some sidhe feel something akin to equality with the commoners they know, while as many commoners manage to see the person inside the noble kith with regard to their sidhe

companions and lovers. The outbreak of hostilities, however, erodes even the strongest class-crossing relationships, and lovers too often find themselves forced apart by war.

How To Use This Book

War In Concordia describes the early stages of the conflict that erupts in the aftermath of the disappearance (and presumed death) of High King David Ardry. As the first stirrings of unease and discontent lead to secret meetings in shrouded back rooms and freeholds throughout the realm of the fae, the cries of revolution grow louder. Three noble factions vie for rulership of the kingdom, while other groups question the need for rulers at all. New voices call out for drastic change, and the Unseelie fae, who have waited for their turn to walk the halls of the Parliament of Dreams, sense their cue to take the stage in the pageant of fae society. Almost by accident, though nothing truly happens without cause or precedent, the die is cast. Erasing thirty years of relative peace between noble and commoner fae, war breaks out and the dreams of peace dissolve into nightmare.

This Sourcebook for Changeling: The Dreaming contains the information necessary to portray a society in the throes of civil war—or revolution, depending on your point of view. While it concentrates on events taking place in the Kingdom of Apples, the cradle of the conflict, War in Concordia also provides an overview of the growing conflict. The inevitable ripple effect spreads from its point of origin as other places in Concordia and the rest of the world feel the repercussions of the fight to fill an empty throne.

Peacemaker, a fiction piece, sets the mood of **War in Concordia** with a tale of loss and rebirth.

The Introduction gives a general summary of the contents and purpose of this book, including major themes and the overall mood of a land at war with itself.

Chapter One: Parliament of Shattered Dreams describes the background to the conflict, provides a list of the factions involved and chronicles the onset of the war. This chapter also describes, in brief, the impact of Concordia's troubles on the fae realms in other parts of the world.

Chapter Two: Fields of Battle and Places of Refuge concentrates on the major locations of the war, with a focus on the Kingdom of Apples, the realm which first galvanizes into violent and irrevocable action. This chapter includes descriptions of embattled or contested freeholds and a few places of safety.

Chapter Three: Children of War and Peace details the major personalities that figure in the war and gives updates on significant characters described in earlier supplements.

Chapter Four: Battlefield Dreams gives guidelines for chronicles dealing with the material presented in this book. Descriptions of battle types, ideas on how to run mass combat (with and without dice), story seeds for future events and suggestions for integrating the war into your own chronicles appear in this chapter along with some information on using questionable tactics on the battlefield.

The Appendix contains information on some new Merits and Flaws as well as a list of treasures and an arsenal of war gadgets.

References

First and foremost, **War in Concordia** draws upon material contained in **Changeling: The Dreaming** as well as the following supplements: *Kingdom of Willows*, *The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner*, *Nobles: The Shining Host*, *Noblesse Oblige: The Book of Houses*, *Pour L'Amour et Liberte: The Book of Houses II*, *The Shadow Court* and *Denizens of the Dreaming*. Although none of these books is essential, all of them contain information

and ideas to help expand and flesh out chronicles involving the war in Concordia.

Storytellers and players interested in war-based chronicles can find many sources of information to help them expand upon their characters and stories. The ready availability of historical fiction set during various wars makes individual novels too numerous to mention. War in Concordia draws on several models of war, from the American and French Revolutions to the Civil War to the many liberation movements of the latter half of the twentieth century. Nonfiction books on military history and tactics, biographies of famous soldiers and encyclopedias of warfare abound. War diaries contain the day-to-day minutiae of men and women at war. Local libraries and bookstores provide the best source for additional reading material.

For details on places, travel guides provide information and pictures to help make stories come alive. Specialized travel guides to Civil War and Revolutionary War battlegrounds can offer ready-made "walking tours" of sites that Storytellers may adapt to their chronicles.

For a good look at the revolutionary spirit and a scathing portrait of arrogance comparable to the most obnoxious sidhe or self-righteous commoner, see Mel Gibson's film *The Patriot* and draw your own conclusions.



CHAPTER ONE: PARLIAMENT OF SHATTERED DREAMS

*A cry of defiance, and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo for evermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoofbeats of that steed . . .
—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Paul Revere's Ride"*

Dearest,

My honor tells me I stand on the edge of madness to write to you at a time like this. Who knows when we will face each other on the field of battle, you wearing whatever uniform you choose for your common cause, me clad in the armor and colors of my house? Yet my heart cries out, *How can we be enemies, who have loved one another so deeply and with such passion?*

For now, my heart holds sway, but I cannot promise you that my honor will not win out in the end. Of course, you may ask, what honor does a member of the Unseelie Court hold? You, of all people, must know the answer to that by now. My honor comes from no outside source, no code of laws or conduct, but from an inner instinct that tells me what I may do and what I may not do. Side by side with my honor, my love draws me toward the course of action I must take. Hence, this letter to you at this time, when any who know of it might brand me traitor for writing it.

You know me as a knight and a warrior, as well as a bard of some account. As the latter, I have absorbed a great deal of knowledge gleaned from gossip, overheard conversations and other casual sources. As a former member of the Parliament of Dreams, I followed the events leading up to the present state of war—for I can call this growing conflict by no other name. I do not know how much of what I know has come to your attention; it was never a matter of discussion between you and me. We had better things to talk about and to do with each other. Even now, the memory of you—the feel of your slender fingers tracing the curves of my body, the dark scent of mystery and smoke that always seemed to surround you, your whispered cries of passion that almost, almost reached my ears—overwhelms and saddens me.

I do not know how you intend to use the information I pass along to you in the notes I include with this letter, but I feel I must at least acquaint you with all that has gone before. Whether you choose to keep it to yourself or share it with those who now make up your comrades-in-arms, I do not care. Either way, I stand condemned of treason. Ask me if I care.

I do not know when I can write to you again, but I will make every effort to do so. Know that you hold my most cherished dreams within your grasp and that I remain, ever, your true and constant lover,

U.

Prelude to War

All wars have a flash point—the lit fuse on the powder keg, the burnt bridge, the point of no return, the moment when belief transforms commitment into action. What grand deed or momentous event serves as the catalyst for war in the realm of Concordia? The conflict that even now escalates into a full-scale war—a Second Accordance War—has its origin not with an assassination or invasion, but with a simple group of pranksters out for an evening of innocent revelry. The flash point for war in Concordia begins, like another revolution three centuries before, with a party.

Before that singular event, however, many incidents serve to stoke the fires of war. Like faggots of wood and kindling stacked around the stake—an image that comes readily to mind—these occurrences build upon each other until all lie waiting for the touch of a flame.

Background

Unaware of the catastrophe that lies before them, a pair of newlywed lovers embarks on a grand tour of their fiefdoms—which happen to consist of the entirety of Concordia, Meant to reacquaint a king with his subjects and to introduce those subjects to their new queen, the journey of David and Faerilyth marks the culmination of an unexpected courtship that began when King Meilge ap Eiluned, ruler of the Kingdom of Willows, sent his young kinswoman to Tara-Nar.

Faerilyth, through no designs of her own, caught the eye of the High King from her first appearance at court. Despite many courtiers' general wariness about a daughter of House Eiluned, Faerilyth managed to overcome the suspicions of all but a few members of the royal court. David sought—and found—many excuses to enjoy Faerilyth's company. Even as rumors spread concerning the dalliance between High King and southern princess, David finally announced his intention to wed Faerilyth. Even more importantly to many throne watchers in Concordia, the High King declared that he would crown Faerilyth High Queen to rule alongside him.

This decision pleased neither David's sister Morwen nor Queen Mab, the ruler of the Kingdom of Apples and the guardian of David's heir, the Dougal Princess Lenore. Nevertheless, David stood firm, confident that, in time, his bride's sweetness of spirit and heartfelt loyalty to him and to Concordia would win over the opposition. Alas, time was something the pair did not have.

Ignorant of the fate that awaited them, David and Faerilyth began a grand tour of Concordia. By traveling throughout the realm and visiting the various duchies, David hoped to accomplish two things. First, he wanted to reaffirm his connection with all his vassals, strengthening existing ties of loyalty and forging new ones. Second, David wanted to introduce his queen and co-ruler to her new subjects, certain that they would warm to her and accept her as High Queen.

The first stop on the tour led the royal couple to the Kingdom of Willows, where King Meilge hosted a grand celebration for them in Willows's Heart. From this point on, the tales vary, depending on the teller.

The least credible version of the events of King Meilge's ball come from the mouths of the pooka—and to hear their stories, each and every pooka in Concordia attended the gathering. According to these inveterate yam spinners, a group of masked marauders assaulted the High King in the midst of the party and spirited him away under the guise of high revelry.

More believable accounts come from other sources and simply state that at some point during the ball, the High King absented himself from the festivities and failed to return. When he discovered that one of his guests of honor had gone missing, King Meilge strove to pacify the other attendees (including Faerilyth) to avoid a panic. When the sword Caliburn suddenly appeared in the hands of a young eshu storyteller, however, no one could deny that *something* had happened to the High King.

At first, King Meilge offered Faerilyth the hospitality and safety of his freehold, fearing that his former ward might become the next target for mischance or that some of the fae would hold her at fault for David's disappearance. Faerilyth, however, had her own ideas and declared that she would assume her husband's position in his absence and continue the grand tour as he would have wanted her to do. Although Meilge seemed less than happy at the prospect of seeing Faerilyth undertake a now dangerous course of action, he could do little to stop her.

Two champions appeared on the scene to assist the High Queen. Seif Raushan, the eshu favored by Caliburn, pledged himself to search for the High King, bringing to bear his kith's birthright as well as the pull of the sword to accomplish his quest. Faerilyth knighted him on the spot to give credence to his task. The second champion,

none other than Sir Lleu Ardwyad, cousin to the High King, offered his service as Faerilyth's protector on her journey across the expanse of Concordia.

Faerilyth stayed a few days more in the Kingdom of Willows, traveling to most of the duchies in that realm and exhorting the fae not to lose heart. From there, she journeyed onward to the other kingdoms, repeating her message to all that came to see her passing. Although nothing further happened to mar the grand tour, rumors of attempts on Faerilyth's life or other threats to her safety have made the rounds. Needless to say, Sir Lleu and the rest of Faerilyth's entourage provided enough protection to ensure that any attempts, rumored or real, failed.

Of Sir Seif's quest, I have next to no information, but since Caliburn has not surfaced in the hands of another, I can only assume that the eshu knight continues his search for evidence of the High King,

I have glossed over these events because I suspect you—along with all the other fae in Concordia, if not the world—have heard more than enough about the missing king. This tale, however, lays the groundwork for the present upheaval. More than anything else, the absence of David Ardry has brought about a state of war among the fae of Concordia.

My own interests lie not so much in the fates of individuals but in the fluctuations of groups. I suppose my own proclivity toward affairs of politics stems in part from my house affiliation, but, I confess, I find more enjoyment from observing groups in crisis than I do from pondering the ins and outs of celebrities.

Although I have never counted myself among the sycophants who worship the High King, I do acknowledge his prodigious achievements. Truly, few realize how much Concordia depended on the person of David Ardry for its very existence. I have watched events unfold from my own vantage point as a member of the "worthy opposition" within the (now defunct) Parliament of Dreams. Though I cannot remain entirely unbiased, I shall attempt to describe the erosion of order and the rise of the present factions in the conflict that has thrust us apart.

Political Repercussions

Concordia reels with shock in the wake of David's disappearance. The peace that brought a sense of security to both nobles and commoners crumbles to dust at the foot of the empty throne. If, as ancient lore would have it, the king is the land, then what becomes of the land when no king exists?

Since his accession to the throne in 1975, High King David has served as the lynchpin for the idea of Concordia as a realm for all the fae, not just those of noble lineage. His protection of and respect for commoners set a standard for other nobles. The Parliament of Dreams exemplified his ideal of fair discourse and the sharing of power. The dream given life by David Ardry has sustained the fae of Concordia for twenty-five years. Now that dream has vanished with its dreamer.

Tremors in the Halls of Power

The news of the High King's disappearance broke upon the Parliament of Dreams like the opening howl of the Wild Hunt. Almost all of the Advocates had come to Tara-Nar, drawn to an unscheduled meeting by vague feelings of impending crisis, as if the Dreaming itself had called them. Though only a junior member, and one of the few openly Unseelie Advocates, I found my opinion on the reason for our coming together sought by several of the more prominent delegates. I confessed that I had no inkling of the purpose of our gathering except that my dreams had driven me to make the journey to Tara-Nar from my freehold by the swiftest means possible.

As speculation rose and the sense of brooding unease grew, the doors of the meeting room burst open to admit a trio of Red Branch knights, distress written plainly upon their faces. The most senior of the three, Dame Enid of House Fiona, strode to the speaker's dais and unrolled a parchment. "It is my sad duty to inform all present that David Ardry ap Gwydion, High King by right of the Dreaming, has vanished under circumstances that have yet to be determined," she said.

Although Dame Enid continued to speak, the remainder of her words lay buried in the tumult that arose from her opening sally. I admit that the sight of so many distinguished Advocates shouting and clamoring for

attention gave me a moment of keen amusement. Then my own shock and dismay claimed my feelings and I withdrew into a far corner of the room in order to observe the ensuing chaos as unobtrusively as possible.

True to form and to everyone's expectations, Duke Dray managed to overcome the pandemonium by the sheer force of his larger-than-life presence—with an assist from the Dreaming, I suspect. Despite what many feel about him, Dray brought the room to silence with a loud command and the backing of his faerie might. He then turned his attention to the ignored Dame Enid and bade her finish her prepared speech. Her report, delivered in a voice made strident by her frustration and obvious grief, informed us all merely that David Ardry had disappeared and that Caliburn had chosen a champion to seek out the High King's whereabouts. From Dame Enid, we also learned that Faerilyth had decided to forego King Meilge's offer of shelter in favor of continuing the grand tour through the realm.

A series of murmurs traveled through the room in response to that choice bit of information, and my guess is that the first suspicions that Faerilyth had her own designs on the throne began at that time. The Fiona speaker concluded by urging us all to remain calm and bide our time until the Dreaming made its wishes for Concordia's future known.

In retrospect, I question the wisdom of Dame Enid's final statement. Whether she had composed her speech herself or whether it was a collaborative effort by the Red Branch messengers, the words sparked a reaction that veered drastically from their calming intentions. The thought that the fate of Concordia—not of the High King—lay in the balance chilled the hearts of all who heard the speech and undoubtedly played a part in the debacle that eventually followed.

Duke Dray thanked the Red Branch for their timely announcement and seemed ready to assume the chair for the remainder of the session until Lord Vogon ap Ailil, my own patron and sponsor, challenged him for right of precedence. "It is clear to me that the Dreaming has seen fit to declare a moratorium on the Seelie leadership of Concordia. Shall we continue to defy tradition when the Dan has shown itself to us in an unmistakable sign?"



The furor that erupted at that time should have warned all of us of what lay ahead. Everyone spoke up at once, trying to argue for one or the other. I remained silent, as is my wont, finding more knowledge in listening than in speaking. I noticed the movement of Advocates around the room, as Seelie and Unseelie separated themselves into groups. Within those groups, other circles took form according to political impulse. The commoners and commoner nobles gravitated toward one end of the room, beside the door, I noticed. I could not fault them for their choice, since the temper within the parliamentary chambers had grown distinctly ugly.

That was not the end of the Parliament of Dreams, however, merely the beginning of the end. We adjourned somewhat untidily, with a general mandate to all Advocates to return to our lands and spread the news among our constituencies. The tacit assumption was that we would also sample the tenor of the fae within our fiefs. A meeting was set for the following month, at which time we would put forth our recommendations and make some "difficult decisions."

Fully six months passed before we managed to raise a quorum for the next meeting of the Parliament. During the long recess, most of the Advocates took the opportunity not only to poll their subjects but also to transform their freeholds into fortresses, undoubtedly sensing the coming conflict. Many followers of the Traditionalist impulse enacted drastic measures to ensure the loyalty of their commoner subjects, enforcing oaths of loyalty upon anyone they suspected of radical leanings. In many reactionary freeholds, the rulers implemented a system of tithes in the form of dross in order to amass their own stores of Glamour. Needless to say, such courses of action did little to increase the bonds of affection between nobles and their commoner subjects and, in fact, led directly to the first sally of the current conflict.

I returned to my own small freehold and immersed myself in a whirlwind of activity. Expecting that any unrest might place my holdings at risk, I, too, made certain of the defenses of house and hearth. I also decided that, as a bard and a watcher of history in the making, I would attempt to chronicle the course of events set in motion by the news of the High King's disappearance. My contacts among both nobles and commoners, including you, my love, revealed the deep shock and dismay that greeted the news of the empty throne. Rumors

spread far and wide telling of midnight caucuses and secret gatherings to discuss the implications of a Concordia left without a ruler.

Accusations and Recriminations

Parliament finally reconvened, after six months of failed attempts at gaining enough Advocates to declare a quorum. Every Advocate, even those known more by their absence than their presence, attended—many with a contingent of trusted retainers to watch their backs. The separate entrances of High Lords Donovan of House Dougal, Erdath of House Ailil and Ariadne of House Eiluned created a stir, since none of these august persons made a regular habit of attending sessions of the Parliament and never had all three appeared at the same time.

One of the most persistent rumors, that a second Night of Iron Knives was in the making, circulated among the commoner Advocates, causing no little consternation every time anyone attempted to close the doors to the Hall of Advocates. By consensus, the doors were finally left ajar, doing much to ease the minds of those spooked by the thought of treachery among "equals."

The first order of business consisted of a prolonged debate on who would preside over the Parliament in "the emergency," a term I found ironic in the light of our slow response time. Duke Dray volunteered to supervise the discussion, an offer shouted down by his many opponents. Other Advocates brought forth their suggestions only to have them met by more opposition. When it appeared that no one could agree on even as simple an issue as electing a temporary Parliamentary Speaker, High Lord Ariadne ap Eiluned pulled rank on the assemblage and claimed the speaker's dais. Recognizing his fellow High Lords, Ariadne invited them to share the podium with him. High Lord Donovan ap Dougal, never one to care overmuch for politics, declined the offer. High Lord Erdath ap Ailil appeared to consider the offer but, after tendering his thanks to the Eiluned Lord, refused as well. Though I did not immediately grasp the import of the exchange between Eiluned and Ailil leaders, I realized later that High Lord Erdath had outmaneuvered his Eiluned counterpart by seeming less eager to seize any semblance of power. That decision would later prove a wise one in the light of the events that followed.

The Eiluned High Lord's action polarized an already divisive group even further, but the Parliament gamely attempted to carry on with business as usual.

Since the assembled Advocates could do nothing about the loss of David Ardry, they settled instead for finding someone to blame for his disappearance. The Parliament soon transformed itself into a court of inquiry, issuing summonses to most of the known Unseelie nobles and to anyone else an Advocate had reason to suspect. The hearings resulting from the appearances of a host of disgruntled sidhe occupied the Advocates for several months.

Many of those summoned simply failed to appear—either refusing to answer the summons outright or making themselves suddenly and inexplicably unavailable. I believe that a number of suspects sought sanctuary with friends or allies in other parts of the world or else retreated to private havens in the Near Dreaming. Despite a rigorous round of questioning by a panel of Advocates headed by Duke Dray, the Parliament could discover no further information about the High King's disappearance. One faction of Seelie best described as reactionary even suggested that the Parliament summon Queen Faerilyth, since she was, presumably, closest to the High King at the time of his disappearance. Others wanted to summon King Meilge, along with most of the dukes and duchesses in the Kingdom of Willows, but saner heads prevailed and the inquisitorial court contented itself with the interrogations of lesser nobles.

A year and a day passed in this fashion. To all intents and purposes, the Parliament maintained the fiction that it continued to hold the fae of Concordia together and that the Advocates were taking actions to resolve the question of the missing king. Other concerns, however, rose to the surface and assumed more importance than the matter of attaching blame.

The arrival by special courier of a letter from High Lord Ardanon of House Gwydion spurred the Parliament into a flurry of activity. Couched in language so subtle that many suspected the work of an Ailil scribe, High Lord Ardanon expressed his dismay at "Concordia's loss" and advised us to put our house in order without delay or he would have to assume that task for us. Even the duller of our Advocates recognized the implied threat and



realized that we must face the problem of the succession of the throne of Concordia. With David Ardry lost to us, who would rule?

Three Queens, One Throne

The problem we faced in deciding the succession lay in the fact that the High King David had left no clear instructions as to who would follow him as ruler of Concordia. Instead, three strong candidates emerged, each with claims to the throne, each with a following of fanatic supporters.

Upon his marriage to Faerilyth, David Ardry crowned her queen and co-ruler of Concordia. When the High King disappeared, Faerilyth declared her belief that her husband still lived and that she intended to carry on in his absence. Those who share her conviction and await the High King's return support Faerilyth's bid for power. Her former guardian, King Meilge of the Kingdom of Willows, leads her supporters and has used his many contacts throughout Concordia to gather support for his protege.

Though barely past her childling years, the Princess Lenore, David's appointed heir, has amassed a group of followers who support her candidacy for the throne. They point to the fact that David assumed the crown of Concordia when still a youth. Queen Mab of the Kingdom of Apples has declared herself squarely in Lenore's camp.

The High King's sister, Morwen, who rules Tara-Nar as Regent in the High King's absence, has gathered a sizeable following. Those who support Morwen believe that Lenore has not yet attained sufficient wisdom to rule in her own right and that Faerilyth's claim to the position is the spurious result of a love-struck king's whim. Morwen herself seems content to support Lenore's nominal rule while continuing to act as Regent. Nevertheless, she makes no attempt to quell the voices of those who demand that she ascend the throne,

For a time, life returned to the Parliament as Advocates stepped up to the speaker's dais to extol their candidate's virtues and strengths. Some of us dared to hope that we could reach an accord and throw our support behind one of the three contenders. Unfortunately, the speeches grew more inflammatory. Fights between rival factions broke out so often that weapons of any kind were banned from the Hall of Advocates. Gradually, more and more Advocates simply stopped attending sessions of Parliament.

Six months ago, High Lord Ariadne grew tired of presiding over an empty room and announced to no one in particular that the Parliament of Dreams would go into indefinite recess. With that announcement and the departure of the last of the Advocates for their homes, the Parliament of Dreams came to an end.

To all my oathmates, an open letter to the knights of the Red Branch:

I call this an open letter because we can no longer call ourselves a secret society, yet I still have hope that we may overcome the differences that divide us, but I fear that our pride and stubbornness may undermine the principles we serve. How have we come to this point, where oathmates battle one another under conflicting banners?

We of the Red Branch have always stood for the highest virtues of our calling—justice, honor, bravery and courtesy—yet now, in the name of those very qualities, we stand divided. Concordia lies in shambles, wracked by the quandary of an unclear succession. Must we, too, follow the path to ruin over a decision as to whom we owe our allegiance?

Our duty calls us to support one another and to uphold the laws of the Dreaming, not to argue over who should wear the crown of Concordia or sit on the throne at Tara-Nar. The signs of Winter are upon us. New creatures burst forth from hidden places in the Dreaming, embodying legends we thought had died with the Shattering. The land lies uneasy, sensing our uncertainty and distress. The Shadow Court grows stronger with each passing month, smelling the reek of our decay as we waste our time in useless bickering.

We should address the true wrongs of Concordia. So what if the throne remains unoccupied? The Shining Host still rides the trods of the Dreaming and holds the land in trust for its houses and honor.

I fear that few of you will heed my words, for your own perceptions blind you to the truth of the matter. Concordia does not need a king, but our land does need those with the wisdom to rule. We of the Red Branch should keep in mind our duty to the Dreaming—a call to arms that transcends the fate of individuals. Let us strip away our badges that proclaim us supporters of Morwen or Faerilyth or even Lenore and let us instead reclaim the symbol of our knighthood.

Perhaps a recounting of our origins and our recent history may remind us all of our oaths to one another and our true purpose. I append such a tale in the hopes that some of you might remember and, in remembering, might heal the rift that separates us from one another.

I remain, in obedience to the Dreaming,
Sir Ranulf Dorsey ap Dougal

The Breaking of the Red Branch: A Knight's Lament

In the time of legends, when the Dreaming lay as close as a lover to the waking world, the fae were a race of heroes and warriors. When dragons arched their fell wings across the skies, raining terror upon all who happened to fall beneath their shadows, the sidhe warriors who battled these fearsome creatures bore the mark of the Red Branch upon their shields. The knights of the fae taught their customs and their honor to worthy mortals, giving rise to the tales of Arthur and his brave companions and setting an example that has provided inspiration to generations of human Dreamers. Even when the cold winds of disbelief heralded the dark times of the Shattering, the knights of the Red Branch continued to bring courage to the fae with their valorous deeds.

When the Shattering itself hit with full force, crumbling the gates to Arcadia, Red Branch knights fought to hold the gates open so that others could depart. Many of these gallant warriors sacrificed themselves in those last fearful days, buying time with their lives for their households.

When the Resurgence allowed (or forced) our return to the mortal world, knights of the Red Branch led the way for the returning sidhe, battling against the horrors that lurked within the Mists and securing safe passage for the rest of the Shining Host. Though our memories suffered when we first burst through into the modern world, we recognized each other by our actions and by our honorable demeanor. Thus we found each other anew and reforged our fellowship, renewing the oaths sworn in ancient times and vowing to continue our traditions of honor to the best of our ability.

When the reluctance of the commoner kith to accept our return forced us into the conflict known as the Accordance War, the Red Branch maintained its high standards despite the viciousness of the battles in which we participated. Other knights might forswear their chivalrous codes when dealing with mobs of commoners, but we conducted ourselves with dignity and valor both on and off the field of battle. We were among the first to protest the Night of Iron Knives, though few commoners made a distinction between lesser warriors and us. Nevertheless, we dealt reasonably with our enemies, offering

quarter whenever possible and granting all who surrendered to us the clemency demanded by our oaths of knighthood.

Concordia's Protectors

David Ardry's emergence came as a blessing from the Dreaming to all the fae, but most particularly to those of us sworn to the Red Branch. To us, High King David seemed the fulfillment of our best ideals, and we banded together under his rule, swearing ourselves not only to each other, but also to the High King's banner and to the dream of Concordia. Thus, we became the guardians of all the fae, for the High King represented all the children of the Dreaming.

The end of the Accordance War marked the beginning of our efforts to reestablish trust in the sidhe among the commoners. Red Branch knights rode throughout Concordia, proclaiming the High King's edicts of mercy and amnesty. We monitored the transition of power in contested regions of Concordia and made certain that the noble rulers honored the High King's wishes. The formation of the Parliament of Dreams gave substance to the belief that commoners and nobles could both contribute to peace among the fae. The Red Branch knights, who served as the protectors of the Advocates and the personal guard of the High King, provided the might that enforced that peace.

During the quarter century of High King David's reign, Red Branch knights have devoted themselves to the safety of both king and realm. As bodyguards to the High King, as knight-servant seeking out worthy causes to aid, as official messengers for Tara-Nar and the Parliament of Dreams and as defenders of all the fae, the warriors of the Red Branch upheld the highest standards of conduct. In battle and off the field, we carried ourselves with honor, never faltering in our duty to the Dreaming and to our oaths.

Each knight of the Red Branch bears the responsibility of recognizing other knights worthy of membership in our society. Knights whose deeds recommend them to our attention receive a secret invitation to join our numbers and undergo a rigorous questioning and testing by a panel of five Red Branch members. Those who pass may then swear the oath of the Red Branch. During the Accordance War, battlefield knightings occasionally took place as a means of rewarding valorous behavior and replacing knights who had fallen in battle. We have even

bestowed the honor of membership on exceptional commoner knights, and a few trolls now belong to our ranks,

Our status as a "secret society" comes not from any need to hide our membership but from a decision to forego public glory and adulation. We define ourselves by our deeds, not by display or acclaim. This secrecy also keeps us from being besieged by would-be members and gives us the freedom to select members without pressure from manipulative nobles or ambitious commoners.

The Branch Divides

When the High King disappeared during his visit to King Meilge, some fae believed that our lapse of guardianship enabled the catastrophe. In truth, Red Branch knights remained close to both the High King and Queen Faerilyth throughout the evening of his disappearance.

Our investigations reveal no failure of duty on the part of any of the knights in attendance on Concordia's



monarchs. Nevertheless, our reputation suffers as a result. Even the devotion of Sir Lleu Ardwyad to the guardianship of Queen Faerilyth has evoked mixed feelings among Concordia's subjects. Some wags claim that Sir Lleu harbors an unspoken passion for Faerilyth. More malicious tongues whisper that he may even have abducted or killed the High King in order to take his place at Faerilyth's side. Our actions since the High King's disappearance have done little to restore faith in our order.

Instead of rallying behind our ideals and maintaining order throughout the realm, we have allowed ourselves to become nothing more than the lackeys of Parliament, running errands for them and keeping watch over their do-nothing sessions. Nothing, however, has brought us so low as our current dilemma: the separating of our fellowship into rival factions, each supporting a different candidate for the throne of Concordia.

The Crown and Flame

Those who bear the symbol of the crown and flame on their shield or blazoned upon their armor uphold the claim of David Ardry's sister Morwen. These knights believe that Lady Morwen should hold the throne in her own right rather than rule as Regent for David's appointed heir, Princess Lenore. They deny outright any claim that Faerilyth might have to the throne. The most outspoken of the Morwenists call for the expulsion of Sir Lleu Ardwyad from the Red Branch, claiming his actions in support of Faerilyth amount to treason to the crown. Many of Morwen's adherents belong to House Gwydion.

The Band of Honor

Those who support the claim of Faerilyth have adopted a simpler badge to represent their position. These knights wear a striped armband around one arm. Lending their voices and swords to the High King's elevation of his new wife to the position of High Queen and co-ruler, the Band of Honor claims that until someone produces proof of the High King's death, Concordia still has a ruler—its queen. Almost all Faerilyth's supporters among the Red Branch come from her own house, Eiluned. A few commoner knights also wear the striped armband to assert their sympathies with the wife of the commoners' king.

The Weaver's Knot

A third faction of the Red Branch supports the candidacy of Lenore, the High King's duly appointed heir. Lenore's advocates wear a woven cord around their

wrists as a token of the Dougal princess's chosen craft. Knights of House Dougal and a few Gwydion who do not back Morwen tend to belong to the Weaver's Knot. Their arguments reflect their acceptance of the High King's own decree naming Lenore as his heir apparent. While some supporters also accept the idea of Lady Morwen's Regency, others believe that Lenore, who has recently come into her wilder years, has the knowledge and expertise to rule as High Queen in her own right.

The Order of the Lioness

Last but not least of the groups to divide the Red Branch, the Order of the Lioness stands for the ascendancy of Queen Mab, in whose domain rests Tara-Nar and who symbolizes both stability and tradition. Fiona knights of the Red Branch have flocked to the Kingdom of Apples's ruler with all the passion that marks their house. Queen Mab's supporters point to her proven ability to rule and to her staunch support of the High King's policies of fair dealings toward all the fae. They maintain that the other three candidates have no experience in direct rule and that only Queen Mab can maneuver among the veteran rulers of Concordia while still holding the hearts of the commoners.

Though Queen Mab's assumption of the guardianship of the Princess Lenore under the tradition of fosterage has not endeared her to Morwen, her position does place her close to the High King's appointed heir and thus places her in competition for the post of Regent should Lenore attain the throne.

One Hope Remains

Despite the divisiveness that threatens our order, one path remains. The Red Branch serves Concordia, not the individual who rules her. Our oaths hold to one another, and our loyalty binds us to our land. Let us, therefore, take the next step and act as caretakers for that land in the absence of a ruler. The sword Caliburn has not chosen a new wielder, for by his own admission, the eshu knight who currently bears the blade does so only in order to locate the rightful bearer. Until that time, no one individual should usurp the throne. I cannot make my words plainer than that. The Red Branch should take up the rulership of Concordia as a group, administering the laws of the fae in the name of her absent king. Only in this way can the land continue to prosper. Only thus can the Red Branch fulfill all its duties without descending into a collection of warring groups whose very existence sullies our name.

My own,

What better time than now to indulge in forbidden passions? The king who stood as a bulwark against those who would trample us into the ground no longer rules the land. Already we feel the nobles' heels press against our necks, as they will us to bow down before them. Our paths, which crossed in mutual love, now diverge as like calls to like, and we must answer the dictates of our consciences. I fear that nothing we can do will bridge the chasm that widens between us now that the tides of war beat upon Concordia's shores.

Still, I send this message to you, along with other words that may, perhaps, clarify my position. Once, you called me your "uncommon commoner" and meant it as a compliment. I took it as such then, but times have changed, and I along with them. I am far less "uncommon" than you think, my love, or else many others have joined my ranks. You told me that I stood out from among the hoi polloi—your words—and that my sense of pride set me apart from other commoners you chanced to meet.

I fear that you would have a hard time picking me out of a crowd of commoners now, my lord and lover, for many of us have found our pride once again. The reason for this change? We have had to learn how to make our way without the shield of David Ardry at our backs, protecting us from the nobles who would use us ill. I know that you bear little love for the lost High King; I, too, discounted his importance until his absence made life more difficult for my companions and me.

You cannot know, for you belong to the privileged class of the Kithain, the ills and slights we suffer daily at the hands of your kithmates. Even when the High King exercised his protective authority to curb the worst of the excesses, we commoners bore the disdain of the nobles in subtler ways. Now that we have no champion in the halls of power, we feel the full force of the nobles' arrogance and hauteur.

Perhaps, when you have heard my tale, you may have some understanding of our "common" feelings in this matter. You may even comprehend why we now go to war, why we have no choice in the matter, and why, should we meet in battle, you will find me an implacable adversary who cannot surrender her sword—or her heart—to you again.

I pray that the Dreaming keep us apart so long as we must stand on different sides. Despite everything, I remain your beloved,

C.

Common Cause: A Sluagh's Journal

Where were you when you first heard the news of the High King's disappearance? News travels quickly, bad news even more so. Word that David Ardry had vanished spread through Concordia with astonishing speed. The news was greeted first with disbelief, discounted as a mere rumor. Few Kithain did more than shrug their shoulders and go on about their daily affairs. Yet, those who listened to the echoes of the Dreaming within them felt a shudder of fear as they realized that something in the world of the fae had gone awry.

For a time, we pretended that nothing had changed. We listened for news about our missing king, followed the rumors of Sir Seif's search for King David and tried not to think too hard about the implications of a leaderless land—or, worse, *a* land with too many would-be leaders. Our Advocates attended the Parliament of Dreams hoping to find some solution within that body of leaders, but they returned time and again with the light of hope dimming in their eyes.

Finally, the news reached us that the Parliament had called an indefinite recess. We knew no good could come of that, since we effectively lost our voice in the halls of fae power. While the mortal world heralded the mistaken onset of the grand millennium, we felt instead the chill of Winter strike our hearts.

Waiting for the Storm

We first noticed a difference in the nobles we thought we knew best. While a few seemed truly concerned with honoring their oaths to protect the commoners under their rule, the majority of barons and counts grew wary in the presence of their subjects.

Freeholds that once welcomed any and all commoners under the protection of the Dreaming suddenly acquired new defenses, coming to resemble fortresses. Commoners desiring entry into these places had to pass the scrutiny of guards who divested them of anything that might serve as a weapon.



Further, nobles whose freeholds contained trods that served as quick means of passage from freehold to freehold instituted "rules of passage" to limit the number of commoners who could use the trods at any one time. Citing possible dangers posed by the appearance of unknown and possibly hostile creatures, referred to by some as Denizens, the nobles and their lackeys tried to convince us that they had devised these new measures to protect us. A few of us believed them, at first, but soon enough we realized these reasons were pooka's truths, concealing their true intent—to monitor and control the use of the trods by the common kith.

Other draconian measures soon followed. Nobles started charging commoners usage fees of dross in order to cross their lands or use their trods. Outright taxation came later, but not much later. Claiming they needed the extra Glamour in order to maintain the safety of the trods, many sidhe lords and ladies sent their reeves to all the commoner freeholds in their fiefs, collecting tithes of Glamour. It didn't take us long to see through that ruse. The taxes served several purposes. First of all, they deprived us of our hard-won Glamour, weakening us to the point that we could little afford to invoke the Dreaming lest we lose our connection to it. Second, they used the tithes to keep an accurate accounting of all the commoners in their realms. Third, they amassed their own caches of Glamour to bolster their defenses and reward their lackeys. Clever nobles.

Stoking the Fires

When we thought that we couldn't take any more of the nobles' increased meddling in our lives, the final crack appeared in our wall of dreams. I speak of the oaths of loyalty.

Timed in such a way that we could only suspect some sort of conspiracy to force the commoners to the nobles' will, announcements went forth to all the freeholds in Concordia—or so it seemed at the time. Although the wording varied from place to place, the proclamations decreed that every commoner, even those already bound by oaths of fealty, must swear an oath of loyalty to the noble in whose realm that commoner resided. The stated purpose of these oaths was "to make fast the Dreaming in this time of trouble and secure the peace of Concordia in the absence of her rightful king." We knew better. The Shining Host wanted only to provide for their own safety

and to forestall any uprisings that might result from their "safety measures."

The Oathtaken and the Oathfree

Many commoners, fearful of what might happen if they refused, took the oath and thus bound themselves to conditions that made rebellion or even strong protest impossible without becoming oathbreakers. When open hostilities broke out, the commoners now known as the Oathtaken became suspect, since their oaths tied them to their sidhe overlords. The sadness that came with the realization that friends, lovers and erstwhile allies could no longer be trusted added even more fuel to the fires of resentment.

Many others, however, resisted, and the ways they found to avoid taking the oath were many and devious. Some refused outright, knowing that this act of defiance would earn for them the label of outlaw. Fleeing their freeholds and taking to the roads, these hard-core rebels became the vanguard of the commoner resistance.

Others simply managed to elude the nobles, sending apologies for not answering summonses, pleading illness or some other excuse for their absence. Many commoner freeholds posted guards along the trods and physical roads leading to their holdings so that they might have enough warning of a patrol of sidhe or troll knights to make themselves scarce. The most creative of the commoners used their ignoble Arts to confuse the minds of the administrators of the loyalty oath so that they believed that they had duly discharged their duty and that the commoners in question had, in fact, taken the oath. Calling themselves the Oathfree, these stalwart Kithain took the only path possible after so long a period of encroaching tyranny. They declared war on the nobles.

The Oath of Loyal Affirmation

As the sun guards the day, as the moon and stars keep watch by night, as the earth upholds the natural order, so do I guard, watch and support my rightful lord or lady. Let weakness of eye and ear and limbs claim me if I fail to remain true to the chosen protector of the Dreaming, and let the Dreaming itself forswear me if I renege in my promise to serve those, in authority over me. My hand to your service, my heart to your cause, my very soul to your will in all things! This I so swear.

TO THE SOLDIERS WHO FIGHT FOR THE DREAM OF FREEDOM:

YOU WHO HEAR MY WORDS HAVE ALREADY SET YOUR FEET UPON A PATH FROM WHICH THERE IS NO RETURN. THE DREAM OF CONCORDIA HAS CRUMBLLED FROM ITS OWN WEAKNESS. IF, INDEED, THE DREAM EVER EXISTED OUTSIDE OF THE MIND OF ITS WELL-INTENTIONED SHAPER, FOR TOO LONG WE HAVE STOOD ON THE OUTSIDE OF THAT DREAM, OCCASIONALLY ALLOWED A SMALL PART IN ITS UNFOLDING AS A CONCESSION TO OUR EXISTENCE WITHIN ITS CONFINES. NOW THAT HE WHO HELD THE DREAM TOGETHER HAS VANISHED, WE SEE THE SHADOWY CURTAIN OF LIES THAT HAD BLINDED US TO THE TRUTH OF OUR OPPRESSION. YOU, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, HAVE THE TASK OF BRINGING DOWN THE OLD DREAM AND PUTTING A NEW ONE IN ITS PLACE, A DREAM NOT OF ONE MAN'S FRAIL HOPES BUT OF A THOUSAND ASPIRATIONS AND IDEALS.

I SPEAK TO YOU NOT AS A GENERAL, THOUGH THE DREAMING HAS PLACED ME IN THAT ROLE FOR NOW, BUT AS A TELLER OF TALES AND A SPINNER OF TAPESTRIES RICH WITH POSSIBILITIES. YOU, TOO, BELONG TO THE COMMON DREAM THAT WE MUST ALL CREATE TOGETHER. IF WE LEARN ONLY ONE LESSON FROM WHAT HAS BEFALLEN US, IT IS THAT THE DREAM THAT GOVERNS OUR LIVES MUST NEVER AGAIN RESIDE IN THE VISION OF ONE AND ONLY ONE INDIVIDUAL. IN ORDER TO SURVIVE, A DREAM MUST BELONG TO MANY PEOPLE, ALL BELIEVING THAT THEY HOLD A VITAL PART IN ITS CREATION AND PERPETUATION.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR THE DREAMS OF WARRIORS, WHOSE STORIES, THOUGH GRIM AND OFTEN BLOODY, ALSO CARRY WITHIN THEM THE SEEDS OF HOPE AND VICTORY. THE TALES OF BRAVERY AND SACRIFICE, OF MAGNANIMITY IN VICTORY, RESISTANCE IN DEFEAT AND, WHEN POSSIBLE, COMPASSION IN CONQUEST BELONG TO YOU. YOU, MY BRAVE AND STALWART SOLDIERS, RISK YOUR DREAM-SOULS AS WELL AS YOUR MORTAL BODIES IN THE NAME OF THE GREATER DREAM OF A FREE REALM IN WHICH GLAMOUR, NOT THE SHINING HOST, RULES. DO NOT LOOK TO ME FOR ANYTHING MORE THAN GUIDANCE WHEN NECESSARY. YOU HOLD THE FUTURE OF ALL OF US IN YOUR HANDS.

HEAR NOW THE TALES OF THE DAWN OF OUR WAR OF LIBERATION AND TAKE HEART FROM THE EXAMPLES OF THOSE MUCH LIKE YOU. THE OLD DREAM IS DEAD. ALL HAIL THE DREAMS THAT TAKE ITS PLACE.

WITH RESPECT AND ADMIRATION,

ADAMA, COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMIES OF THE DREAMING

Warcries Echo: An Eshu's Tale

The outbreak of war, the moment in which thought becomes action and action becomes violence, came unexpectedly, or so it seemed at the time. Looking back now on the events as they unfolded, the eyes of the storyteller—my eyes—can see the unmistakable signs of inevitability. Too many of us had suffered too long under the yoke of our taskmasters and our tax collectors. The little indignities that we commoners accepted as a matter of course, chalking them off to the innate and occasionally forgivable arrogance of the *sidhe*, gave way to greater affronts and outright insults. Finally, with the imposition of taxes of dross, travel restrictions and the abominations that passed as loyalty oaths, our patience grew thin and shattered outright.

Social creatures by nature, we gathered in small groups to commiserate and speculate on what the next depredations would involve. Many societies, both open and secret, adopted new agendas regardless of their original purpose, engaging in plans for worst case scenarios. As conditions grew more restrictive and difficult, particularly in the Kingdom of Apples, where both Taranar and the Parliament of Dreams are located, small gatherings of commoners—and a few sympathetic *sidhe*, though not many—met frequently to plan what to do if the situation grew intolerable. Some commoner freeholds became hotbeds of rebellion. Other commoners managed to meet together under the eyes of their *sidhe* lords and ladies. It never fails to amaze me how little attention the nobility pays to the "lesser" creatures so long as they appear to know their place.

We attempted peaceful negotiations at first. In almost all circumstances, the *sidhe* nobles either refused outright to discuss any terms with us or else toughened their stance in response to what they perceived as our recalcitrance. Matters escalated until only one recourse remained.

Even then, when an active and visible protest seemed the most logical, if not the only, course to take, the incident that served to ignite the fuse took all of us by surprise. The most inspired actions usually do. Here is the tale as I received it, altered only in small ways to provide a more intelligible story.

Boston Harbor Revels: March 17, 2000

On the evening of March 17, when most of the city still reeled from the day's festivities and parades, a group of commoners—most of them members of the Commoners' Liberation Organization, though some Ranters undoubtedly joined them—led by a young, energetic and charismatic fox pooka named Fenarius, gathered at Boston Harbor. Drawn there by rumors that Count Conerlaihnn, one of the more assiduous proponents of "controls for commoners," had a cache of dross collected from his vassals and stored aboard his personal ship, Fenarius and his comrades decided to express their displeasure in a very visible and prominent fashion.

Disguising themselves as a group of revelers, they approached the count's pleasure yacht, *Reverie*, at its berth in the harbor. Fenarius convinced Conerlaihnn's retainers to let his movable party come aboard the ship to share some particularly potent brew with them. I'm certain that they had help from the Dreaming in succeeding in that ruse.

Once they gained the *Reverie's* deck, they proceeded to overpower and subdue the crew and seize the dross aboard the ship. To their surprise, they discovered not only a sizeable cache of dross taken from the count's subjects, but also several other containers of dross belonging to other local nobles, including Duke Tymon, whose disdain for commoners had long caused problems in the Boston area. Questioning the captive crew, Fenarius learned that the count intended to deliver the dross to some "buyers" in the Kingdom of Willows. Fenarius and his fellows offered to provide a more direct method of delivery to the prospective buyers and dumped the entire store of dross into the waters of the harbor.

While touted as an enormous "victory" for the commoners and a grand lark for Fenarius and company, the incident later dubbed the Boston Harbor Revels had far reaching and immediate consequences, not all of them favorable. When Count Conerlaihnn heard that his shipment of dross had fallen afoul of a motley of upstart commoners, he flew into one of the rages for which his house is famous (or infamous). Blaming his crew for incompetence, he had them stripped of their Glamour and cast out from his freehold to make their own way in the world as common mortals until such time as the Dreaming saw fit to touch them again. He increased his



To the Bottom of the Sea

As news of the Boston Harbor Revels spread throughout Concordia, many changelings wondered why Fenarius and his "revelers" chose to unload their booty into the waters of Boston Harbor rather than make away with the captured dross. Not a few would-be sympathizers criticized the perpetrators for squandering Glamour, particularly since the precious dross represented the "tithes" from local changelings. When asked to explain his actions, Fenarius cited the dangers of traveling in "enemy territory" with such a large quantity of traceable Glamour.

Coming from a pooka, this patently logical answer alerted many that heard it to the likelihood that something else motivated the decision to dispose of the Glamour. Speculations finally settled on one of two possibilities. Rumored sightings of an odd-looking, submersible chimerical vehicle in Boston Harbor's Near Dreaming have led to suspicions that nocker co-conspirators had lain in wait to harvest the dumped containers of dross, spiriting them off via sea trod to some secret hideaway for later use by the rebels. Another popular rumor concerns the reputed alliance between some commoners and the enigmatic and mysterious merfolk; it's claimed that the dross tossed into the harbor served as a payment in Glamour for the assistance of the sea changelings. A third theory maintains that pirate ships from the Fiefs of Bright Paradise lay in wait just outside the harbor, ready to send out divers to retrieve the dross, and that Fenarius and his troops have taken out letters-of-marque with the Fiefs' most notorious privateers and buccaneers in order to forestall assistance from the fae in lands across the ocean from Concordia.

levy on his vassals, demanding even more Glamour to replace his lost supply, and sent his knights on a sweep of his holdings in search of the perpetrators of the theft.

Though Fenarius and his crew managed to disappear into the night, hiding out among friends and, later, leaving the barony despite the restrictions on travel, other commoners who had the misfortune to resemble one of the dross snatchers suffered the count's wrath. A band of sidhe and trolls sworn to the count swept through their lord's lands, stopping at every freehold with letters of search and seizure. These enforcers demanded dross from everyone within each place they visited. Worse, they forced one member of each freehold to return with them to the count's freehold as guarantees of the good behavior of the other residents. Appeals to a higher authority had no response, for Conerlaihn's liege, Duke Tymon, lent his full support to the count and refused to hear any petitions from commoners regarding their treatment.

No doubt, Conerlaihn hoped his penalties would harden the commoners against the rebels who had, after all, brought about the harsh measures through their actions. Fenarius and his allies had done their work well, however; the commoners refused to fall for the count's ploys. Instead, they decided that the time had come to take a stand. Without exception, the harried commoners of Conerlaihn's lands formed themselves into an army, meeting and drilling in secret in preparation for a time they knew would not be long in coming.

The Battle of Coldfort

As news of the Boston Harbor Revels spread throughout the Kingdom of Apples, commoners suddenly found their dreams of freedom reemerging. The thought that somehow we might break the three-decade-long tyranny of the sidhe once and for all took root and blossomed. Secret meetings took on a new urgency. Motleys joined together to form local militias and hone their combat



skills in anticipation of open hostilities. By the middle of April, an army of commoners sprang into existence. Though still a force of undisciplined irregulars scattered widely throughout the realm, the Armies of the Dreaming—for that is what we had begun to call ourselves—waited only for an opportunity to test our newfound solidarity. Our chance came within a month of the Boston Harbor affair and centered around the small freehold of Coldfort near New Haven, Connecticut.

Upon hearing a plea from the beleaguered commoners of Coldfort to come to their aid, an assault force of irregulars from the Commoners' Liberation Organization traveled by night from their headquarters in Boston to New Haven. Joining up with the local commoner militia led by a young satyr firebrand named Andros, the combined forces marched on Coldfort with the intention of liberating the freehold from its tyrannical ruler.

Situated atop a hill overlooking the city of New Haven, Coldfort commanded a good view of its surroundings. Apart from its location on high ground, however, the freehold had little in the way of defenses from armed assault.

Our forces outnumbered the defenders of Coldfort. Attacking by surprise, Andros led his irregulars up the hill and toward the outer walls of the small, fortlike structure. The residents of the freehold fell back as we pressed beyond the gates and into the inner courtyard. The first casualty occurred when one of the defenders, a dog pooka, fell beneath the spiked gauntlets of a redcap irregular.

The sight of the pooka's broken body galvanized both sides into greater fury, bringing home to attackers and defenders the cruel truth that war had come to the fae of Concordia.

Tactically, the battle belonged to the attackers. Andros had numerical superiority as well as the benefit of surprise. Furthermore, his irregulars, while not quite an "army," had trained for just such an opportunity to rise up against the nobility. What no one counted on was the courage of one of the baroness's vassals, a troll childling whose heroic defense of her lady's freehold earned her the respect of both sides. Though she nearly lost an eye in the battle, Idrisia's tenacious stand at the doorway to the freehold itself rallied the defenders.

Inspired by the sight of the young warrior maiden, blood streaming down her face and angry determination radiating in her stance, the Kithain of Coldfort closed ranks and steadily drove back Andros's irregulars, breaking the impetus of their charge.

In the wake of rumors (later proven false) that an army of sidhe knights from a nearby freehold were riding to the assistance of Coldfort, Andros called for a retreat, leaving the freehold in the hands of its defenders.

Though we lost the battle, we sent a message to the nobles of Concordia that they could not ignore. Within a fortnight, other sidhe-held freeholds came under assault by commoner armies, untrained militia and unruly mobs of changelings. The war for freedom had begun.

Coldfort: The Other Side of the Story

Since laying claim to Coldfort in the days following the Accordance War, Baroness Agriana of House Fiona had ruled her small freehold in keeping with the guidelines set by the High King. Few commoners in her realm voiced any complaints about her and, indeed, looked upon her as a gracious liege, exemplifying many of the best qualities of her house and her kith.

The years, however, did not treat the baroness kindly. As she passed from wilder to grump, she became more intolerant of change, particularly with regard to the weakening of respect for authority among the younger changelings under her rule. As a Traditionalist, she firmly believed in the *sidhe's* inherent right of rulership. She also maintained a commitment to the protection of her subjects according to the feudal bond. The more modern attitudes of many of her newer subjects disturbed her, though she attempted to understand the changing times.

A staunch admirer of Queen Mab as well as a supporter of the High King, Baroness Agriana grew distraught when news of David Ardry's disappearance reached her. With the accompanying erosion of established authority and the collapse of the Parliament of Dreams, the baroness feared the worst. Where once she believed implicitly in the goodwill of her commoner vassals, she now imagined renegades and reprobates at every turn. Retreating more and more into the seclusion of her freehold, she fell prey to the early stages of Bedlam. Nightmarish chimera born of her own dark imaginings haunted her nights, and bad news filled her days.

After consulting with many of her peers, other nobles who also felt threatened by the swiftly deteriorating political climate in Concordia, the baroness initiated a course of drastic actions intended to ensure the loyalty of her subjects. Almost overnight, the barony became an armed encampment. The baroness forbade her subjects from traveling outside the borders of Coldfort and denied them contact with any commoners not pledged to her own allies. As the grumblings grew louder, Baroness Agriana responded by issuing proclamations forbidding her subjects to carry weapons and requiring them to swear new oaths of loyalty. Those who refused found themselves cast out of their freeholds and banished from the barony.

Ironically, many of the commoners of Coldfort would have rallied behind their baroness out of genuine loyalty, realizing that her paranoia came from fear rather than from any real malevolence. These supporters complied with their baroness's demands, though they did not understand why Agriana felt a need for such harsh measures. Foremost among the baroness's devoted followers, the troll childling Idrisia distinguished herself in the battle, winning the respect of her enemies and setting an example for her companions.

To those who have not yet made their choices, a letter of hope:

You who read these words, written in haste and prepared for speedy delivery by couriers from the Unicorn's house, realize that I have only my own eyes as witness to what I have seen. I have watched with growing horror as the peace that was so hard won three decades ago has shattered. While commoner and noble once more face each other across a field of bloody battle, and as my own Scathach brothers and sisters find themselves caught on both sides, I have not yet found my own place in the scheme of things. Instead, my companions and I have dedicated ourselves to the promulgation of news, riding the trods late at night bearing word of battles fought and won or lost, of freeholds fallen or strongholds defended, of heroic deeds and less savory actions.

This communiqué differs from most, however, for what I have to tell—of what I saw and what came after—fills me with both a thrill of hope and a shudder of fear. If you have received earlier messages from me or my fellow riders, then you know that our words relate the truth as we know it. We have no reason to lie. This, then, is the true tale of what I witnessed last Highsummer Night.

May the Dán bear witness to my words.

Rowena the Just, Senior Rider
Riders of the Midnight Trods

Steeds in the Night: A Messenger's Warning

While other kingdoms of Concordia celebrated the revels of Highsummer Night, the feasts of pranks and jests did not take place in the Kingdom of Apples, or, if they did, the participants met under tight security lest the nobles who forbade the gathering of commoners discover them. I spent the night in much the same way as I have spent more nights than I care to remember, riding the High North Trod that winds its way from the Green Mountain Duchy to the Duchy of the Back Bay. Laden with my usual packet of broadsides and letters, I had nearly reached the southern end of the trod. As I prepared myself to emerge within the heart of Boston's Dreaming, I noticed a strange sensation in the air around me, as if a mammoth storm was building along the trod itself.

My first thought was that someone had discovered our secret road and devised some method to destroy it from within, I had no time for a second thought, for the explosion of brightness at the end of the path knocked me from my horse, momentarily blinding me and, I think, rendering me unconscious for a few crucial moments. My last thought was a fervent hope that I would fall on the path rather than lose myself in the strangeness of the Mists.

When I woke, I found my faithful mount, Fyrelight, standing placidly at my side, protecting me from harm. I remounted and continued my ride, coming through the Boston-side gate at the trod's end, in a secluded portion of Boston's Public Garden. As I emerged, I noticed a young knight standing in a semi-daze, the newness of his voile and armor plainly apparent. I also took note of the carefully wrought blazon of House Gwydion on his shield, worked in a style unknown to me yet one that



called forth echoes of times long past. His form and face drew my attention, since they both approached a standard of perfection seldom encountered outside of artistic renderings of heroes and legends. I think I knew that he had just arrived from the Dreaming and was somehow connected to the pyrotechnic display I had witnessed earlier on the silver path.

I gave him greeting, as one knight to another, and asked him if I could assist him in any fashion. "I seek my home and my crown, lady," he said in a voice that hardly rose above a whisper yet thundered like a clarion call in my heart. The voice of a king, I thought. I introduced myself and asked his name. His eyes narrowed as he heard me announce my house, but he made no comment except to acknowledge my words with a graceful nod.

"I am Danwyn ap Gwydion," he said. "I have urgent news for your High King."

"You seek the one thing that I cannot give you," I replied, "for our High King has disappeared, and none has yet claimed his throne."

Sir Danwyn's face grew troubled as he listened to my words. "Then it seems that my arrival has taken on a new purpose," he said, his voice growing stern and decisive. "A land cannot survive without a ruler, and if none here be fit to rule or to claim the throne, then perhaps the Dreaming has called me where there is need."

My first impulse, as I heard the confidence in his voice and saw the utter sincerity shining from his countenance, was to drop to my knees and swear fealty to him. Something inside me, however, warned me not to act on impulse, and I withdrew a few paces to regard him more dispassionately.

"Forgive me for seeming impertinent, sir," I said, "but many others press their claims to the throne of Concordia. Do you have a claim that will stand against theirs?"

The knight smiled, and I saw the keen hunger of the falcon regard me from his eyes. "My claim will stand up to any, save that of the missing king himself, I believe," he said. "Yet perhaps I should take the advice you are about to offer and make myself acquainted with this realm and its subjects before I present my credentials."

I closed my mouth upon the words I had been about to utter and regarded him with something akin to trepidation. Surely he could not be a prophet as well as a

knight and a would-be king! "I have a message to deliver, sir," I said, cautiously refraining from explaining the nature of my current package of news and letters. "When I return from my rounds, I shall be happy to help you find accommodations suiting your rank."

Sir Danwyn nodded his agreement, or so I thought at the time. In retrospect, his gesture might have signified dismissal, though I shall never know for certain. With that, I left him concealed within an arbor of trees and went about my business.

Some hours later, I returned to the place where I had left Sir Danwyn. The area was deserted and, despite a thorough search, I could find no sign of his departure—it was almost as if the Dreaming that had cast him into the world had once again taken him into itself.

I opened the Garden trod and made my way back to my starting point, still bemused by the evening's odd events. As the days passed, however, the incident faded from my mind.

Within a few weeks, rumors coursed through the Kingdom of Apples: A new claimant to the High King's throne had arisen, a Gwydion knight of such grace and natural nobility that many changelings already committed to other candidates were abandoning their causes to flock to his banner. It did not take me long to realize that this rising star among the Shining Host was none other than Sir Danwyn.

Since then, I have made it my business to follow the progress of this knight from a distance, watching him closely for some indication that he is worth my loyalty. I very nearly gave my oath to him when I first met him, and that utter willingness to submit my will to his terrified me. Now I have seen that my reaction but presaged the reactions of others.

My tale nears its conclusion, I wish only to proffer some remarks for consideration by those who read these words. Should you encounter Sir Danwyn and find his arguments convincing, ask yourself a few questions before you decide to cast your lot with him. Who is this knight so fresh from the Dreaming yet so familiar with Concordia and its troubles? What brings him to us now rather than at some other time? Does his coming presage hope in the face of the coming Winter, or is he a harbinger of Winter personified?

You want a battle cry? How about "Death to the Sidhe!" Let me get this straight, in case you missed it the first time around when we surrendered our guts and our souls to David the Wonder Boy. The nobles fucked us during and after the Accordance War. The "accords" that brought the war to an end gave everything to the winners and dumped a load of shit on the heads of the losers.

You wanna deny that? You want to come up with a short list of "good nobles"? You say your baroness is different from the others, she respects you? So how come she has a title and you don't? Who has a louder voice in the affairs of her barony, you or your lady? Get my drift?

If you're not a noble in Concordia, you aren't worth the contents of your toilet—chimerical or otherwise. It's taken us thirty years to learn this lesson. For awhile, we believed that things would get better, that King David's peace would pave the way for a new and better world. We were fools. The Concordian Dream did not have room for the likes of us, the foul-mouthed liberty-loving commoners who broke their backs to survive in a world that didn't want us, didn't believe in us and gave us no quarter.

Now David's gone, and the whole gingerbread house has gone stale. The cookie has crumbled, the barn door stands gaping and the shit has most definitely hit the fan.

How's that for eloquence?

I'm no orator and you're not here for pretty speeches. You want to know the truth about the war? Then bend over and I'll give it to you.

—from a speech by Rotgut Redhelm, recruiter for the Urban Renewal League

Fields of Blood:

A Redcap's Craving

Too many of us have faced the Undoing since the end of the Accordance War. Unlike the pretty nobles who hide in their freeholds to extend their years, most of us don't have that luxury. We have to live in the world and grab Glamour where we can, even if we have a freehold to shelter in when the winds of Banality blow too cold.

A lot of commoners mourned the disappearance of the High King as if he were some great friend and protector. A lot of commoners have big gaping holes where their brains should be. David's disappearance couldn't have come at a better time. The old ways have just about worn out their welcome, and most of the weak-willed so-called leaders of the "common folk" have grown too old to care or remember who they were or what they gave up to receive permission from the nobles to continue their existence.

Get this straight. I'm not here to discuss which candidate would make a better High King or Queen. I'm talking about a real revolution, an off-with-their-heads, cold-iron-to-the-gut-of-every-noble uprising of the commoners against the antiquated tyrants who have walked all over us for thirty years.

This is not some civilized dispute over ascendancy. This is war, bloody, vicious, exhilarating, serious—did I say bloody?—war. Those of you who have made the decision to cast off the yoke of slavery to the so-called nobility need to understand one thing before you go any further. If you join us, there is no turning back. From this day forward, every "decent" changeling will revile you for what you do.

Let Adama lead his Armies of the Dreaming to their slaughter as he tries to fight an honorable war against a foe who invented the rules of honorable combat. Our army doesn't call itself an army. We don't march in formations or wage carefully plotted out campaigns. Our weapons are cold iron, terror and things that go "boom" in the night. Our goal: the annihilation of the ruling class. And yes, I mean it when I say "death to the sidhe!"

Undoubtedly you've heard of our opening sally. If you haven't, let me tell you a story that will chill your heart, curl your toes and tickle the fancy of every true redcap who hears it.

Massacre at Mount Granite

The freehold at Mount Granite, in the mountains of New Hampshire, might seem an inoffensive place and an unlikely target for those anxious to strike a blow for freedom. No important lords or ladies made their home there. Far from it; the self-effacing Liam lord who ruled Mount Granite had an impeccable reputation for treating his subjects with absolute egalitarianism—not to mention his solicitous attitude toward the Dreamers in the small artists' community at the foot of the mountain freehold. As a matter of fact, Sir Brannian served as a shining example of King David's much vaunted peace—and that fact alone put him at the top of our list of those targeted for "Urban Renewal."

We believe in the usefulness of object lessons, and our lesson for September 12, 2000, was a simple one. You don't have to be notorious or infamous to get cacked by the forces of anarchy—all you have to do is "be."

The simpletons at Mount Granite made our task almost too easy. Sir Brannian's boggan seneschal welcomed an itinerant nocker, cast out of his freehold and desperate for Glamour, with open arms. Although Carver told his host that he just wanted shelter from the rain and a night near the Balefire, the lord of the freehold insisted that his guest take advantage of the full three days of hospitality. In return, a grateful Carver offered to make whatever repairs he could within the freehold, gratis.

Just like that, we were in.

Over the next three days, our agent-in-place gave poor, trusting Sir Brannian's freehold a complete overhaul, installing fool-proof locks, refurbishing his security system, cleaning his basement and improving his defenses, although Sir Brannian assured Carver that he had no fear of the commoners in his holding rising against him.

On the third night, we struck in force. From our hiding places within Mount Granite's very walls, we infiltrated every floor of the freehold. The pair of troll guards proved the most difficult, for we had to take them by surprise and without rousing the rest of the house. Fortunately, Carver had the foresight to dose their food with a powerful emetic. We grabbed them in the crapper and cut their throats before they could pull up their pants.

The rest of the incursion was just too easy. We paraded from room to room, killing most of the household in their sleep. We saved Sir Brannian and his seneschal for last, although we grabbed them right after we offed the trolls. It's amazing how dumbfounded a sidhe can become when he's awakened by the thud of a beloved guard's head as it lands on his chest in the middle of the night.



Watching their faces while we did the childlings, however, made it all worthwhile. Taking the lord of the freehold and his poor pants-pissing seneschal came almost as an anticlimax.

The papers carried a story about a bizarre multiple murder in a secluded homestead in the mountains of New Hampshire. So far, the police have failed to find either a motive or any hint as to the identity of the perpetrators. But the message traveled to its intended audience, the other nobles of Concordia. If harmless, commoner-loving nobles like Sir Brannian could meet such a horrific end, then no one was safe from the armies of liberation.

Our message is absolute: no mercy for the sidhe and their lackeys. Your deeds won't save you. Your friends will die with you. We intend to rid the world of the scum that call themselves our overlords. Only then can the commoners regain the freedom we sacrificed three decades ago on the altar of honor and accord.

End of story.

Redhelm's Words to Kill by

- Nobles — aren't.
- If it looks like a sidhe, acts like a sidhe and bleeds like a sidhe, it probably was.
 - If it claims to be noble and it's still moving, make it stop.
 - When a noble asks for mercy, take his head in one clean stroke. Otherwise, take your time.
 - The only good sidhe is — wait, there are no good sidhe.
 - Fiona, Gwydion, Liam, Ailil, it's all just a matter of, well, taste, if you know what I mean.
 - It's only cold iron when it goes in — the blood warms it right up.

I grow too old for this. Yet again the searing winds of prophecy scream through my body, ripping my limbs from their sockets and burning my lungs with their scouring passage. Once more I cry out in agony as the light of visions from the Dreaming pierces my eyes. The blood boils in my veins and my heart thunders in my chest.

When I was a maiden, my voice sang with the summer chorus. Even so, when my loins gave birth, I rejoiced in the fulsomeness of the harvest and gloried in the resplendence of my years. Now that I have seen too many seasons, all time shivers with the chill of a winter that has come to stay. For many years now, I have embraced the winter court and led a darker song among the singers in the shadows.

All my dreams have come to pass. I saw the passing of the host from grim Arcadia into the harsh yet vibrant world of flesh and Autumn. I witnessed the call to arms and the accords of peace. I felt the desolation of the land as its leader fell from grace into the cold, dark pit of iron-clad nightmares. I heard the screams of a realm once again at war, with no mercy asked or given, and no hope for a peaceful resolution.

Now other visions batter at the weary doorway of my spirit. I cannot hold them back, yet I fear the messages that even now pour from my lips. This, I know, is our fate—but is it our salvation or our doom?

—from the Visions of Yordana, Lady High Ritualist of the Shadow Court



Words from the Shadow: A Seer's Dreams

The Second Reaving of the Mists

*Again the clarion mists grow thin
Sound the warning cold ones return
Ring the changes old hopes arise
Close the portals new dreams remain*

Yordana's Interpretation: Those who scribed this prophecy tell me I spoke these words in a flat-voiced cadence, as if stepping to some long, slow processional rhythm. What meaning lies behind these measured phrases? Within this verse I see hints of a new revelation. The first part of each line indicates some form of announcement or warning, while the second half of the line describes an event—the thinning of the mists, the return of the cold ones, the rising up of old hopes and the assurance that new dreams remain in the world.

Does this refer to a change in the nature of the Dreaming itself? Perhaps the Mists that prevent us from remembering our home will now disperse, freeing us to participate fully in our ancient heritage. Perhaps something else comes from the Mists. The possibility also exists that this "prophecy" actually pertains to the recent arrival of the Dark-kin, although I cannot believe that hindsight operates in this manner. I can only surmise that these words serve as both an admonition and a proclamation. But of what? And when?

The Coming of the Falcon's Child

*From the Dreaming
Falcon flying
Kingdom dying
Autumn calling
Cycle turning
Comes the child who is no child, whose mother is no
mother and whose father is no father
Comes the king who is no king, whose throne is no throne,
whose sword is no sword
To the Dreaming
Falcon soaring
Kingdom crying
Winter falling
Bonfire burning*

Yordana's Interpretation: This prophecy indicates the appearance of a new figure in our midst, one who more fully embodies the need for a king to lead us through the inevitable Winter. The ascension of David Ardry to the throne of Concordia now seems but a precursor to an even greater occurrence. Do these words, however, refer to the rise or the fall of House Gwydion, or do they presage the coming of something entirely new from the limitless storehouse of creativity that we know and revere as the Dreaming?

The particulars of this "child" certainly suggest someone out of legend. Like many heroes from the time of myth, the subject of this verse possesses an origin wrapped in mystery and surrounded by apparent contradictions. The references to winter and bonfires suggest not only the obvious Samhain celebration, but also a return to the ancient, now abandoned tradition of the annual sacrifice of the ruler to the land. Could this be the sign that such a return to the old ways lies before us?

The Rise of the Sleeping Courts

Out of their deep slumber, when the first long snows of winter break the branches of their forest prison, shall they stir in old anger.

Out of their iron cages, when the icy winds blow across the watery deeps, shall they whisper in harsh anticipation.

Out of their ancient longing, when the crimson eye opens in unleashed fury, shall they emerge in readiness for battle.

Who will stand against them?

Where now rides the Shining Host?

Who wields the sword and spear?

Where is the casque of sorrows?

Who will find the keys?

Yordana's Interpretation: The oldest legends speak of creatures inimical to our kind, of ancient battles and harsh resolutions, of curses and geasa brought about in order to preserve the existence of the children of the Dreaming. I almost fear to attempt to interpret this verse, for its meaning—even without explication—terrifies me. Those we once fought and vanquished are even now stirring in their slumber. Their prisons and places of exile grow weak as winter approaches and the time comes when they, too, will hear the call and awaken to inhabit the world they left long, long ago.

If this happens, we shall surely fall to their stored-up hatred unless we possess the means to overcome them. Ancient foes require ancient weapons, and many of those items from the time of legends have disappeared into the Mists.

To me the most disturbing aspect by far is the reference to the opening of the crimson eye. Those of us who have seen the Eye of Balor in the skies of the Near Dreaming have not slept easily since our first sighting of its ominous presence. We may need more than mere heroes to ensure our survival if all comes to pass as I have foreseen.

The Winter King

After the Samhain fires have purified the bones of the summer court

After the first fell flakes of winter snow have purged the ground of signs of autumn

After the fruits of summer wither on the vine in vain pursuit of spring's remission

Only then will come the one who walks in winter's glory, clad in starlight and crowned with crystal tears

Only then will come the lord of winter, who holds the fate of all who dream and all who walk in dreams in his hands

Only then will come the king of the dark season, who alone can ken the secret of the hidden sleepers

Yordana's Interpretation: David Ardry fulfilled the promise of the summer king, the Seelie ruler whose established order would usher in a period of stability to heal the breach caused by the Accordance War. I would put forward the premise that these words prophesy the coming of a new scion to rule the fae during the swiftly approaching winter. The winter king, as my prophecy suggests, embodies the aspects most closely associated with that season—night and cold and frozen tears. Again, a reference to the "bones of the summer court" seems to indicate that the Dreaming wishes us to return to the ancient and venerable practice of ritual regicide,

Just as the verse referring to the "sleeping courts" fills me with dread, these words instill within me a sliver of hope, although it is a winter's promise, dark and cold and filled with grim purpose.

Timeline

June 6, 1998: David disappears; search begins. Faerilyth and Morwen declare sides.

Lenore moves to Mab's court. Faerilyth continues the tour of Concordia as an act of faith in her husband's continued survival.

Jan. 2000: Parliament of Dreams meets once again to try to resolve issue of succession. After endless debate, members are at each others' throats with no clear winner and dozens of sides.

Mar 17, 2000: The "tea party" in Boston Harbor (aided by pirate raiders from the Fiefs of Bright Paradise) galvanizes the nobles into a frenzy and puts the commoners on alert that they had better act quickly.

April 19, 2000: The Battle of Coldfort takes place, consisting of a commoner assault on the freehold of Coldfort. A young female troll named Idrisia rallies the defenders and they win the day, but the violence spreads to nearby freeholds. This is the "official" beginning of the War for Concordia.

July 17, 2000: The appearance of Danwyn ap Gwydion from the Dreaming and the beginning of his Crusade of Dreams.

September 12, 2000: Rotgut Redhelm and the Urban Renewal League begin their campaign of terror with the massacre of all the residents of Mount Granite Freehold.

Divided We Stand: Secret Societies and Motleys

Secret societies proliferate through all strata of fae society. In many cases, the "secret" of these groups' existence has long ago spanned the gap between hushed rumors and loudly proclaimed facts. Other societies have retained their clandestine nature. As prewar anxieties spread throughout Concordia, members of these social- and goal-oriented groups gather together to discuss possible strategies in the event of open warfare. When war finally breaks out, many of these groups come down firmly on one side or another—or another. Others, like the Red Branch, splinter into factions as the war divides them by allegiance to a potential successor or some other pertinent issue.

While by no means a comprehensive listing of all the secret societies of the fae, the groups covered in this summation give an idea of just how deeply the war has penetrated the collective consciousness of the sons and daughters of the Dreaming.

Updates on Existing Societies

Many of the societies already entrenched in the fae social order have come into their own because of the political upheaval. While some groups have sprung into furious activity, feeling that their time has come at last, others have scrambled to find a place for themselves or to redefine their goals in the light of recent events.

Beltaine Blade

Led by the outspoken Traditionalist Duke Dray, cousin to Duke Dafyll of Accordance War fame (or infamy), the Beltaine Blade has emerged as a major factor in the war for Concordia. Never happy with the High King's compromises with the commoners, members of the Blade secretly—or not so secretly, in some cases—rejoice at the disappearance of David Ardry. Even so, the Blade has not settled upon a single candidate among the contenders for the throne. By and large, the Beltaine

Blade considers Faerilyth nothing more than an extension of her husband; her rule, they maintain, would only encourage further concessions to the commoners and result in an even greater erosion of sidhe power bases. Both the Princess Lenore and David's sister Morwen have some support among members of the Blade who perceive Lenore as malleable and able to be influenced by the proper advisors and recognize in Morwen a less conciliatory attitude toward commoners.

Both Duke Dray (naturally) and King Meilge of the Kingdom of Willows have strong adherents, though neither individual has openly proclaimed a desire to enter the battle for the throne. For the most part, the Beltaine Blade has taken the opportunity caused by the outbreak of war to reassert its strong conviction that the nobility should hold all the strings. Citing the recent examples of rebellion and insubordination, the members point to the danger of allowing commoners any but the shortest of leashes. Almost without exception, this group intends to use the current disorder to recoup its loss of power under the High King's rule and increase its influence in fae society. See *Noblesse Oblige* and *Nobles: The Shining Host* for more information on the Beltaine Blade and its membership.

The Catacomb Club

Composed primarily of commoner nobles, the Catacomb Club desires the restoration of its lost prestige and power since the Resurgence. While many of its older members have fallen to Banality, a few of the original membership still remain and have passed their legacy of bitter nostalgia and broken dreams on to younger but no less ambitious up-and-comers.

Most commoners who know of the Catacomb Club have little sympathy for its members, suspecting them of merely wanting to substitute their own rule for that of the sidhe. The Ranters, in particular, have singled out the Catacomb Club's most prominent spokespersons as targets. Since the disbanding of the Parliament of Dreams, many Club members who had served as commoner Advocates have sought to establish their own power base within the aegis of the Catacomb Club.

In particular, one group of Advocates has formed a fae version of the colonial Congressional Committee with the intent of drafting a constitution for the "New Concordia" to make certain that government "of the commoners, by the commoners and for the commoners" becomes part and parcel of any new regime.

Though it has enemies in both commoner and noble society, the Catacomb Club clings to its goals with a tenacity born of desperation and fired by opportunity. More information on the Catacomb Club can be found in **Nobles: The Shining Host** and **The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner**.

Cat's Cradle

The Seelie and Unseelie noblewomen who make up this clandestine network dedicated to the survival of the fae have fallen upon hard times in the aftermath of the outbreak of war. Both Faerilyth and Mab belong to the Cat's Cradle, and while each of them wishes to avoid widespread turmoil, each finds herself drawn by her supporters further and further away from the Cradle's goals. Despite the society's lofty aims, its members have little real understanding of the plight of the commoners. They decry the factionalism that shatters the community of the fae without truly realizing the real divisions that separate the rulers of changeling society from the vast majority of Kithain.

Similar to the knights of the Red Branch, their ideals and commitment to a higher cause suffer from the breakdown of the social structure. The loss of the High King, a visionary leader and a secret supporter of the Cradle's work, has caused irreparable damage to the threads of the Cradle. **Nobles: The Shining Host** and **The Shadow Court** contain additional material relating to the Cat's Cradle and its goals.

The Children's Crusade

With the outbreak of hostilities between nobles and commoners, the youthful assassins of the Children's Crusade have come into their own. Taking advantage of the custom of fosterage, members of this group have ensconced themselves within the freeholds of nobles targeted for assassination. While most sidhe nobles refuse to believe in the existence of child assassins, a few now

regard their youngest vassals with suspicion. This, of course, does nothing to ease relations between commoners and nobles—a factor that only strengthens the cause of the antinobility movements,

The displacement of many commoners from their freeholds has provided the powers behind the Children's Crusade with a pool of potential recruits, as homeless childlings seek refuge with anyone willing to grant them a place to call home. In return for shelter and a supply of Glamour, many castaways gladly learn the arts of stealth and murder under the quiet and insistent tutelage of the Shadow Court. More information on the Children's Crusade can be found in **The Shadow Court** and **The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner**.

Emma's Little Helpers

This organization of female redcaps, currently led by a particularly vicious and outspoken member known as "the Hellion," has taken it upon itself to strike terror in the hearts of as many male Kithain as possible. Though they prefer to target sidhe and trolls, the Little Helpers have little compunction about expanding their repertoire to include other kith when the opportunity arises. Since the disappearance of the High King, who reportedly threatened numerous times to outlaw the organization, many former Advocates of the Parliament of Dreams have found themselves the recipients of anonymous threats by individuals claiming to represent the Little Helpers.

Officially, Emma's Little Helpers maintains that it serves as an advocate for abused women and children. Certainly, the members have participated in rescue operations against Dauntain and have acted as protectors for many female commoners.

Their penchant for overt acts of violence, however, has increased with the deterioration of the social order among the fae in Concordia. In some areas, the Helpers have taken the "law" into their own hands, claiming abandoned freeholds and instituting their own brand of "due process." **The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner** contains additional information on Emma's Little Helpers and its notorious leader.

Eyes of Balor

These covert operatives of House Balor have long anticipated this moment. From their positions inside freeholds throughout Concordia, these masters of disguise and espionage now see their opportunity to strike back against the hated children of the Tuatha. With the fall of the Parliament of Dreams and the fracturing of the Red Branch, the major bastions of order in Concordia have suffered irreparable damage, and the Eyes of Balor hope to take advantage of their enemies' weakness. Whether masquerading as a loyal Dougal vassal of a Gwydion lord or as an Eiluned sorceress taking part in regular meetings of the Cat's Cradle, the Eyes of Balor await only their instructions to carry out their true mission.

While the Eyes remain one of House Balor's best kept secrets, a few members of the Shadow Court suspect their existence and hope to use them to solidify their own position in the escalating hostilities. The Eyes, however, have their own plans for the Shadow Court.

More information on the Eyes of Balor can be found in **Pour L'Amour et Liberte: The Book of Houses 2**.

The Golden Sickle

Although ostensibly removed from the drama and intrigue of changeling politics, members of the Golden Sickle have plunged heart and pocketbook into the war for Concordia. Made up primarily of Modernists who believe that reaching an accommodation with the Autumn World holds the key to the future of the fae, the Golden Sickle controls much of Concordia's finances. Particularly in the Kingdom of Apples, where the financial hub of New York City exercises its own peculiar Glamour in the form of money and power, the Sickle takes a keen interest in the current state of affairs.

Their Modernist tendencies lead them to shy away from any hint of a return to the traditional sidhe-based form of feudal paternalism. Most members either support Faerilyth, who promises to continue the progressive policies of her husband, or else they back Lenore, the designated heir to the throne of Concordia. Those who believe that David still lives fall into Faerilyth's camp, while those who suspect that David is dead ally themselves with Lenore. A very few support Morwen for High Queen in her own right, rather than as Lenore's Regent.

Too many members of the Sickle feel that Morwen may not share her brother's pragmatic streak and fear that pressure from sidhe Traditionalists may lead her along a reactionary path.

The influence of King Meilge, former guardian of Faerilyth and one of her strongest supporters, has led many members of the Sickle to provide financial and other mundane forms of support to Faerilyth's cause. **Nobles: The Shining Host** provides more information on the Golden Sickle.

Guardians of the Gates

While the members of this society of Balor sidhe purport to act as guardians of the Paths of Balor and protectors of the roads through the Dreaming from the terrible Fell beasts who lurk nearby, the Guardians have a more sinister purpose. These Balor sidhe have insinuated themselves into one of the most powerful positions in fae society. As "protectors" of the trods, the Guardians exercise control over traffic along the pathways they guard. This ability to permit or deny access to certain key paths through the Dreaming gives the Guardians the opportunity to delay passage of troops or ensure a speedy and safe arrival of reinforcements, thus making House Balor pivotal in determining the course of the war. Those who believe that Balor sidhe lack the subtlety for long-term planning and clever manipulation have only to look at who stands at the portals of the most traveled trods.

Additionally, the Guardians have the closest contact with the newly arrived Denizens and have initiated attempts to enlist their aid in House Balor's plans, drawing on their shared history as enemies of the Tuatha.

Pour L'Amour et Liberte: The Book of Houses 2 provides additional information on the methods of the Guardians of the Gates.

Guardians of the Silver Dragon

These Ailil knights represent the brightest and best warriors of their house. Bound by a code of honor as comprehensive as that of the Red Branch, the Guardians of the Silver Dragon take pride in their skill both on and off the battlefield. Though ostensibly created to protect the interests of House Ailil in particular and the Unseelie court in general, the Guardians also exist specifically to oppose the Red Branch in any eventual conflict, such as the current war among the fae of Concordia.

The Guardians stand ready to move at a moment's notice. Having made pacts with members of House Balor's Guardians of the Gates, members of the Silver Dragon have easy access to vital pathways through the Dreaming and, thus, enjoy a distinct tactical advantage over their Seelie counterparts in the Red Branch. In addition, the Guardians of the Silver Dragon have not yet fallen prey to the factionalism and infighting that plague the Red Branch at this time.

The present war also provides the Silver Dragon with the perfect opportunity to realize the other portion of their agenda—the reclamation of Ailil holdings that have fallen into Seelie hands since the Resurgence. At least in Concordia and, perhaps, in other parts of the world, the Guardians of the Silver Dragon are mobilizing to take back what was once theirs.

Pour L'Amour Et Liberte: The Book of Houses 2 provides additional information on the Guardians of the Silver Dragon.

Iron Brigade

The personal bodyguard of the "Iron Duke" once consisted of a small group of Unseelie trolls and redcaps known for their iron-toed boots and iron spear tips as well as their overly aggressive tendencies. Since the announcement of the High King's disappearance, Duke Toren na Gulan has stepped up a campaign of active recruitment, and the Iron Brigade has more than tripled in size. Intelligence sources speculate that the duke has plans to build a full-sized army of iron-wielding commoners with which he intends to mount a war of conquest and establish his own empire. In the meantime, the Iron Brigade stays close to its headquarters in Duke Toren's mountain freehold in the Kingdom of the Burning Sun, unwilling to commit itself to any faction until it has the strength of numbers and arms to overwhelm its enemies. Needless to say, the Iron Brigade neither gives nor asks for quarter and takes a no-holds-barred, Escheat-bet-damned approach to warfare. See **The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner** for additional information on both the Iron Brigade and its ambitious leader.

Iron Paladins

This secret order of Unseelie Gwydion knights holds the potential to strike a powerful blow against other Unseelie fae in the upcoming war. Their twisted philosophy and fondness for forbidden weaponry combined with their Gwydion zeal make them a deadly threat to any individuals or groups that they target as their foes. Regardless of the official house stance on these unacknowledged loose cannons, the Iron Paladins have an edge in any battle in which they take part—simply because they do not hold to standard forms of battlefield etiquette.

A few nobles fear or disdain the commoner masses to such an extent that they might welcome the assistance of the Iron Paladins, but none would openly admit to doing so. Whispers that the Iron Paladins masterminded the Knight of Iron Knives once again circulate throughout Concordia, and commoners shy away from the sight of any Gwydion knight decked out for battle. Needless to say, this does not help the house's standing, especially now that the High King's disappearance has removed one of the most powerful reassurances of House Gwydion's good intentions.

The rumor mills grind furiously as the war heats up, and one of the most persistent and most widely believed tales holds that Duke Dray has enlisted the Iron Paladins to pave the way for his own ascension to the throne of Concordia.

See **Noblesse Oblige: The Book of Houses** for more information on the Iron Paladins and their disreputable ways.

Knights of the Cold Watch

Haunted by their memories of the "dark things" that harried the returning sidhe through the Mists, these Unseelie knights—most of them card-carrying members of the Shadow Court—have stepped up their efforts to patrol the lands that border on the Near Dreaming. The recent emergence of the creatures known as Denizens took many members of the Cold Watch by surprise. The resultant flurry of activity within the ranks of Cold Watch knights has caused a few members of the Shadow Court leadership to wonder whether this group might not be planning something covert, such as a takeover of the Shadow Court in preparation for their own bid for power.



In the meantime, the Knights of the Cold Watch have redoubled their recruitment of promising knights of the three Unseelie houses, realizing that they must increase the territory their patrols encompass. First and foremost on their agenda is the location and questioning of as many of the Denizens as possible to ascertain whether or not anything else came through in the wake of the Denizens' appearance. In fact, some members of the Cold Watch believe that a few of the Denizens bear a disturbing similarity to some of the creatures encountered during the Resurgence of 1969.

A few members of the Shadow Court seek to redirect the goals of the Knights of the Cold Watch to more immediate ends, such as the takeover of a weakened and leaderless Concordia. The Knights, however, are steadfast in their belief that greater foes than the Seelie court

exist, and that they are the last, best line of defense against these terrors from beyond the Mists.

More on the Knights of the Cold Watch can be found in **The Shadow Court**.

Knights of Sathar

Though this Fiona-based knighthood of commoners and nobles once dedicated themselves to the philosophy of chivalry, the Knights of Sathar now find their goals put to the test. As an order based on an ideal—that all fae who meet the standards of nobility and chivalry deserve consideration as knights—the Knights of Sathar hold a unique place in fae society. From their freehold in upstate New York, granted to them by Queen Mab at their inception at the end of the Accordance War, the Knights of Sathar have sworn to work for the good of commoner and noble fae alike.

Many of these knights have pledged themselves to Princess Lenore as the rightful heir to the throne and as the candidate least Likely to arouse the animosity of either nobles or commoners.

As riots and skirmishes erupt throughout the Kingdom of Apples and threaten to spread to other parts of Concordia, the Knights of Sathar have busied themselves with attempts to ensure that the codes of chivalric conduct prevail, even in the heat of revolution and rebellion. The incidence of battlefield recruitment among these knights has increased, as the Knights of Sathar seek to grow their membership and make it easier for them to cover more territory. In short, this group seeks to keep alive the original dream of David Ardry: an egalitarian society representative of all the fae and supportive of the best qualities of both nobles and commoners.

More information on the Knights of Sathar can be found in **Noblesse Oblige: The Book of Houses**.

Loki's Brood

These political aficionados associated with House Fiona have suddenly found themselves in the spotlight. Traditionally styling itself as the worthy opposition of everything, Loki's Brood now has a myriad of stances to oppose. Under the leadership of Duke Selim, the Brood has played an instrumental part in the rupturing of the Parliament of Dreams—primarily due to its knack for locating weaknesses in any argument and pursuing those weaknesses with the tenacity of a starving redcap.

Now that the Parliament has disbanded, Loki's Brood seeks other targets—and finds a plethora of them. Scathing songs written by musically inclined members of the Brood now make the rounds from freehold to freehold, mocking everything from the fall of the Red Branch to the virtue of (choose one) High Queen Faerilyth, Lady Morwen, Queen Mab and Princess Lenore.

While Loki's Brood maintains that it serves only as a "cautionary service organization" (with the purpose of preventing fae society from taking itself too seriously), the group's detractors allege that it serves a darker purpose and seeks to undermine the changeling social structure preparatory to its takeover by the Shadow Court.

Rather than defend his group from these accusations, Duke Selim has maintained a sinister silence on the subject.

Noblesse Oblige: The Book of Houses contains more information on Loki's Brood and on Duke Selim.

The Low Road

Since its origin, Low Road members have served as a rescue organization for commoners convicted of petty crimes. While some fae believe that the Low Road only undermines the social structure by preventing rogues and minor offenders from receiving just punishment, others see these changelings as liberators of persecuted commoners.

Over the years, the Low Road has been responsible for extracting numerous changelings from the arms of sidhe "justice." The time has come for the Low Road to call in its many favors.

The Low Road has steadily increased its numbers since the fall of the Parliament of Dreams, growing into an organization that more closely resembles an army (or a militia) than a secret society. Practice "rescues" and drills in isolated places indicate that the Low Road intends to put its talents to use in the near future. Possible actions include the rescue of commoners prevented from leaving their freeholds because of their inability to pay trod taxes or meet travel requirements imposed on them by a frightened nobility.

A movement has grown among members of the Low Road to merge with the Minutemen, since they share some common goals. If this happens, the combined forces will attain the size of a small army.

The **Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner** contains more information on the Low Road.

The Minutemen

Formed as an elite group of commoners dedicated to the prevention of abuse by the nobility, the Minutemen specialize in rescuing other changelings from insane, tyrannical or just plain "evil" nobles (or ennobled commoners). Reports that a few members of House Scathach form part of the leadership of the Minutemen come as no surprise to most people who hear of the brash actions of this group. As the war in Concordia heats up, more and more branches of the Minutemen spring up in even the most unlikely places. Since many commoners believe that the sidhe, as a whole, have gone 'round the bend in the wake of the High King's disappearance, all commoners are, by definition, an "at risk" population and, thus, candidates for intervention by the Minutemen.

Coordinated efforts by the Minutemen and the Low Road have led to rumors that the two groups intend to merge their forces, but some members of both groups feel that there are enough important differences between the two groups to keep them distinct from one another. Certainly, the Minutemen seem more willing to use extreme measures in their interventions than do the Low Road members and, where the Low Road usually targets individuals for their rescues, the Minutemen often deliver entire freeholds from despotic lords and ladies.

Information on the Minutemen is also contained in **The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner.**

Monkey's Paw

One of the oldest and most dangerous of the "secret" societies of the fae, the Monkey's Paw traces its origins to the time of the Shattering. An elite group of assassins made up mostly of commoners but said to include a few (presumably Unseelie) members of House Scathach, the Monkey's Paw has, up until now, hired itself out to the highest bidders. Rumors now circulate claiming that the Shadow Court has placed the Monkey's Paw "on retainer" and has initiated the systematic removal of the most troublesome or prominent Seelie nobles. A few who know of the existence of the Monkey's Paw hold this group responsible for the disappearance of the High King. Many nobles have doubled and tripled their contingent of bodyguards out of fear that the assassins of the Paw have singled them out for attention,

While many commoners have romanticized the Monkey's Paw, seeing its elusive members as heroic rebels against authority, these assassins view themselves as mercenaries with a long and bloody lineage. When societies crumble, the Monkey's Paw goes to work and turns a tidy profit for its efforts. Whether or not it also pursues its own agenda is anybody's guess.

More on this group of assassins can be found in **Nobles: The Shining Host** and **The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner.**

The Ranters

From their origins in the seventeenth century to the present day, the anarchist commoners who make up the Ranters have enjoyed an unbroken reign of random violence that has made their name the stuff of legends. Notorious for their hatred of anything that smacks of nobility, the Ranters excel in outrageous escapades, frequently using ridicule in combination with violence to express their disdain for what they call the "outdated and oppressive feudal system" of fae society.

Under the leadership of their flamboyant and elusive leader, the enigmatic Kithain who goes by the name "Ravachol," the Ranters have attracted a great deal of attention throughout their existence. Organized into small cells to preserve the anonymity of the group as a whole and to prevent wholesale betrayal by individuals, the Ranters keep a low profile, believing that only their actions should give visible proof of their existence.

Their antics eventually grew so disruptive that the High King outlawed the Ranters. This action, of course, made them heroes in the eyes of many commoners. While the Ranters have claimed responsibility for the disappearance of the High King, not everyone believes them. Some feel that Ravachol simply wants to fan the flames of rumor, or else that he seeks to lead investigations away from the true perpetrators of the crime. Many believe that the Ranters wish they had done the deed and are attempting to steal the notoriety from those truly responsible. Still others suspect that someone else has paid the Ranters handsomely to take credit for removing King David from the throne.

Some newer groups of revolutionary-minded commoners have attempted to initiate contact with the Ranters, hoping to join forces with them or at least take lessons from these experts in social mayhem. Whether the Ranters decide to involve themselves in the war in a systematic way or choose to follow their usual course of random chaos remains undecided—and likely will be that way for some time.

More information on the Ranters and their charismatic leader can be found in **Nobles: The Shining Host** and **The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner.**

The Red Branch

Of all the fae societies, secret or not, the Red Branch has perhaps encountered the most difficulties following the disappearance of David Ardry. The fracturing of this knighthood has epitomized the divisiveness within changeling society. While the Red Branch stood united, the fae could look with confidence upon its noble leadership, knowing that the high standards of this legendary knighthood would prevail and that the knights would act in the best interests of all the fae. Now that the Red Branch has collapsed into factions, each supporting its own candidate for the throne of Concordia and belittling the other contenders, the scions of courage and integrity no longer stand apart from and above their fellow changelings.

Each faction of the Red Branch, moreover, stands ready to fight the other factions if necessary. The supporters of Faerilyth have already come to blows with Morwen's supporters, while those who back Princess Lenore have made their readiness to defend their charge plain to all challengers.

The most bitter feelings, however, come from those members of the Red Branch who blame Sir Lleu Ardwyad, David's cousin and close friend, for allowing the High King to vanish in his presence. Word that Sir Lleu had forsworn himself because of his negligence and his forbidden passion for the High Queen has poisoned the Red Branch more than any other single event. The guilt or innocence of Sir Lleu matters little at this point. The damage to the reputation (and the self-image) of the Red Branch has been done.

As disturbing as the division within the Red Branch, the effort of Sir Ranulf Dorsey ap Dougal to keep the Red Branch together brings little comfort. Sir Ranulf's solution to the controversy over the succession suggests nothing less than a military takeover of the throne. Regardless of their reputation for integrity, courage, honor and all the best qualities of the nobility, the knights of the Red Branch have little experience with the finesse and political acumen necessary to rule a society of fractious changelings. Such a solution, most changelings believe, would spell the end, not only of Concordia but of fae society in general.

Information on the origins of the Red Branch and some of its prominent members may be found in **Nobles: The Shining Host** and **Noblesse Oblige: The Book of Houses**.

The Sneakers

Though their membership currently consists of one representative from each commoner kith, the Sneakers are considering expanding their ranks in the expectation of an increased demand for their services. Experts in infiltration and espionage, the Sneakers are not above more blatant measures such as mugging, terrorizing and blackmailing. Needless to say, this is a "commoners only" group—even Scathach and Liam sidhe are not welcome, regardless of their sympathies. Though most, if not all, the members of the Sneakers belong to the Unseelie Court, they take great pains to deny any attachment to the Shadow Court. This denial, of course, makes them suspect.

Information on the members of the Sneakers can be found in **The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner**.

Sons of Liberty

This motley makes its home in the freehold known as the Fool's Gambit, a tavern in Boston's Combat Zone that houses the stump of the original Liberty Tree. Since their founding, the Sons have dedicated themselves to the principles of liberty and commoner rule. They welcome any and all Kithain, regardless of court or kith, so long as they bring no dissension into the freehold and abide by its rules.

Recent events in the Duchy of Back Bay, however, have catalyzed the Sons of Liberty into action. Many members have attended meetings and rallies sponsored by the Commoners' Liberation Organization (see below), and several of the Sons participated in the Boston Harbor Revels. Determined not to lose either their freehold or their freedom, the Sons of Liberty have begun active recruiting of like-minded commoners along with a few sidhe who have cast their lots in with the incipient rebels.

Freeholds and Hidden Glens provides more information on the Sons of Liberty.

Veterans of the Accordance War (VAW)

Although three decades have passed since the Accordance War, a few members of this commoner veterans' organization still hold on to some small remnants of Glamour. These greybeards and grumps have used the VAW as a social club and as a way to keep alive the tales of their exploits (and those of their fallen comrades) during the war years.

Now that a new war threatens to outdo the Accordance War in violence and intensity, the members of the VAW find their expertise highly sought after by commoners eager to learn the ways of war from the survivors.

In some parts of Concordia, particularly in those areas of the Kingdom of Apples most affected by the early skirmishes of the war, the VAW has been outlawed by local nobles and their members hunted down and imprisoned or worse. Many Veterans have sought refuge in other parts of Concordia or have gone underground, taking advantage of some of the clandestine groups that specialize in spiriting changelings away from danger.

See **The Fool's Luck: The Way of the Commoner** for more information on the Veterans of the Accordance War.

Newcomers to the Cause

Within the last few years, as tensions between commoners and nobles increase, new societies have arisen that reflect the polarization of opinions among the Kithain. Some of these societies operate completely underground, while others, particularly those groups directly involved in the early events of the war, have a relatively high profile for secret societies."

Childling Underground Railroad

This group consists of homeless childlings led by a Seelie redcap wilder named Jenni Quick. One of the early victims of the crackdown on commoners, Jenni saw her freehold overrun by a band of sidhe in retaliation for an alleged attack on the local lord and his retinue. Although innocent, Jenni and her motley lost their home, and several of Jenni's friends lost their fae souls to the chimerical blades of their attackers. Since then, Jenni and her friends have dedicated themselves to finding and

protecting outcast childlings too young to fend for themselves. Taking a page from mortal history, these wilders managed to set up a network of secret safe houses, often enlisting willing Kinain or enchanted mortals in their efforts. The group continues to grow as more and more childling casualties appear in the spread of the war. Any of the young charges who shows an interest in becoming part of the network itself undergoes "on-the-job" training at the hands of one of the more experienced wilders. And so the network spreads, offering refuge and sanctuary for the most helpless victims of the war.

The Common Rights Society

In the wake of the War of Dreams, many changelings have become disgusted with the ongoing struggles for power and titles. Some have organized themselves into a society dedicated to attaining equal, or common, rights for everyone. The name of the group confuses many fae, as they think the society is only for commoners. In fact, both sidhe and commoners have united to advance the society's goals. Commoners do make up the majority of members, as they are the most comfortable with modern notions like equal rights and leadership through proven ability rather than birthright. Sidhe who join have embraced such modern philosophies far more than most of their kith. They too agree that those in charge should be elected based on talent for leadership. This is a major change in attitude for those who have always considered themselves rulers and nobles by virtue of their kith.

For such an innocuous and well-intentioned group, the society has attracted a lot of enmity and resistance. Those sidhe who know of, but are not members of, the society tend to believe the group's goals run counter to their place in the Dreaming and that it poses the greatest threat to changeling society of any political organization. They argue that sidhe are supposed to be the embodiment of the dream of nobility and rulership and that refusing to fulfill that role weakens the dream and therefore encourages Banality. If everyone is the same, then everyone risks boredom—a prime contributor to Banality—and *that* steers changelings closer to Endless Winter.

On the other hand, many disaffected commoners blast the group for accepting sidhe into their ranks, arguing that the nobles are untrustworthy and likely to revert to old patterns when pressured. Some advocate the eradication of sidhe rulership entirely (a few propose to affect this by eradicating the sidhe). They believe if the sidhe were truly dedicated to the ideals of the society, they'd eschew leadership roles and avoid seeking election. Until they see such compliance, these commoners show only hostile attitudes to group members.

The society advocates common ownership of freeholds and an equal sharing of Glamour, dross and treasures based on need. It also works to expunge the idea that Seelie means "good" and Unseelie equates to "evil," again calling for acceptance of all despite differences in kith, seeming and court. As the war drags on and more fae find themselves exiled from their usual haunts or hunted by various opponents, the Common Rights Society seems to make sense to more and more fae.

Commoners' Liberation Organization (CLO)

This grassroots organization works diligently to preserve the rights of commoners. Its ultimate goal lies in the creation of a democratic parliament with elected representatives. The CLO claims that the time of the nobles has passed and that the current situation just underscores the fragility of the quasi-feudal system that has ruled Concordia since the Resurgence. Though not outright proponents of violence, members of the CLO believe that any and all means of making their position known to the sidhe rulers bears consideration, including raids on nobles' stores of Glamour. They argue that the noble houses have not yet emerged from the Dark Ages and that the commoners, with their clearer understanding of the modern world, have a stronger right to rule than the so-called mandate from the Dreaming claimed by the sidhe as justification for their assumption of authority.



Crown Loyalists

Composed of Seelie sidhe, along with a few trolls, this group supports Faerilyth's claim to the rulership of Concordia. These changelings believe that the High King still lives despite his absence; therefore, his chosen co-ruler, Faerilyth, still holds the rightful claim to the throne. They argue that the claims of Morwen, Lenore and anyone else have validity only upon proof of David Ardry's death. While most Crown Loyalists belong to House Eiluned, a number of Faerilyth's supporters come from House Fiona, which has a weakness for affairs of the heart, particularly when those affairs combine with politics.

The Damned If You Do Fellowship

Most of the commoners who make up the membership of this group have had to abandon their freeholds for one reason or another. Some have fled from sidhe nobles rather than swear an oath of loyalty. Others found themselves forced out of their freeholds by other commoners intent on taking advantage of the breakdown of authority and the prevailing sense of anarchy. Still others have had to leave their holdings because they support the "wrong" candidate for the throne. Above all, the Fellowship refuses to serve as cannon fodder in a war between nobles. The group's nominal leader, a pooka named Jen Blackstone, named the confederation of self-imposed exiles in a moment of whimsy; the name stuck. The Fellowship's primary aim is survival, at any cost. The fellows happily derail the plans of any nobles they encounter and give the same treatment to commoners who associate with sidhe. Any aid they render to commoners outside the Fellowship comes with a price—usually in the form of dross or temporary refuge in a freehold where they can replenish their Glamour.

Kithain for a Free Tomorrow

This group presents itself as a commoners' rights organization working to protect the rapidly dwindling rights of nonnoble Kithain. Although members of this society do strive to achieve these ends, the core leaders have a subtler agenda, one dictated by their masters in the Shadow Court. While the group's stated goal consists of promoting the welfare of commoners, the primary intention of the group is to perpetuate dissension among the various political and social factions, thus preventing any efforts at unification or conciliation among the

warring Kithain. The society also acts as a smoke screen behind which the Shadow Court can enact its devious plans. Most of the group's members remain unaware of their Leaders' affiliations, thus making them perfect dupes for the plots and ploys of the Shadow Court. Although Kithain for a Free Tomorrow openly advocates passive resistance to the restrictions imposed on commoners since the High King's disappearance, the true movers of this group use the shadowy tactics of sabotage and assassination to sow confusion and discord among all the factions and sides in the war,

Riders of the Midnight Trods

Primarily composed of members of House Scathach and commoners associated with the house, these mounted messengers have taken it upon themselves to relay as much information as possible to all the Kithain of Concordia. Drawing their material from various contacts among many of the other societies as well as from eyewitness reports, the Riders employ a network of trods, known only to them, that stretch across the Kingdom of Apples and connect with similar paths through the Dreaming in other parts of Concordia. Their faerie steeds, specially bred by House Scathach kin in the Kingdom of Apples, carry the Riders unerringly and swiftly along these silver paths. Some guardians of trods otherwise forbidden to most changelings are secret admirers of the Riders and allow them free passage whenever necessary, but for the most part the Riders confine their journeys to their own secret trods.

In addition to news of the war, the Riders also bear letters back and forth between Kithain separated by the travel restrictions—families, lovers, friends and even warriors on opposing sides of the conflict.

Led by a young Scathach knight named Rowena the Just, the Riders maintain a studied neutrality for the present, finding no candidate among the nobles or commoners worthy of their support. Recently, however, news of the arrival of a strange knight fresh from the Dreaming has caught the attention of the Riders, and a few of them have dared to hope that this newcomer may give them a candidate to support at last.

Urban Renewal League

Composed primarily of Unseelie redcaps and nockers, the Urban Renewal League supports the idea of Unseelie rule, their own. The general chaos grants them not only the opportunity but the right to reorganize society according to their ideas. Of course, reorganization on such a pervasive level involves some necessary cleanup and trash removal. A few things are bound to get broken in the process, among them sidhe heads and other body parts. Members of the URL believe that, although the price for urban renewal may be high, the trash can be quite tasty! The group's reputation for violence and excessive cruelty has resulted in the abandonment of freeholds in their path in order to avoid a run-in with the League.

The Ripple Effect

Although the High King disappeared from the Kingdom of Willows, the Kingdom of Apples lies at the center of the war. Tara-Nar and the Hall of Advocates, closest symbolically to the fallen king, first showed signs of stress and dissolution. The Boston Harbor Revels, the siege of Coldfort and the massacre at Mount Granite Freehold announced to the world at large that King David's age of peace and concord had finally come to an end.

Now, two years after its shaky beginnings, the war spills outward into the rest of Concordia and makes its way across the oceans to other realms of the fae. Though major outbreaks have yet to occur outside the Kingdom of Apples, the pressure builds as the center of Concordia dissolves into chaos and bloodshed.

The following descriptions give an idea of how other Kingdoms within Concordia as well as fae societies in other parts of the world react to the outbreak of war. Storytellers should feel free to change this information to suit their own chronicles. It's your war—go for it!

The Rest of Concordia

Continuing the grand tour planned as a honeymoon present by the High King, Faerilyth placed herself in a precarious though tactically brilliant position. By personally visiting the major freeholds of Concordia and making her case in person, Faerilyth has done much to forestall an immediate panic reaction to the news of David Ardry's disappearance. Unfortunately, her delaying tactics have run their course and the other kingdoms of Concordia now make their own plans—plans that do not necessarily coincide with those of their neighbors.

Kingdom of Willows

Though no one knows as yet of King Meilge's part in the High King's disappearance, many changelings expect him to take advantage of the vacancy at the top. Meilge enjoys the respect and near adulation of most of the nobles in his realm of Willows, largely because of his possession of the Alabaster Mask, which literally provides him with a false face that predisposes others to love and trust him.

With Faerilyth ensconced in Duchess Igrania's freehold of River Landing, many changelings who support Faerilyth now consider that freehold the new heart of Concordia-in-Exile. King Meilge ostensibly supports Faerilyth, but he has secretly opened negotiations with other monarchist nobles concerned with restoring order to Concordia by the swiftest means possible (i.e., a coup by conservative and Traditionalist sidhe and a crack-down on commoner uprisings—this despite his own known Modernist leanings). Meilge hopes to advance his own cause through this alliance while simultaneously appearing to support his Eiluned ward in her bid for the position of High Queen.

Armies of commoners and sidhe now recruit members in many parts of the Kingdom of Willows, but no one is certain whose side they will join when the war reaches Concordia's southern lands.

Kingdom of Grass

Queen Mary Elizabeth of House Dougal has taken care to shore up her defenses in anticipation of commoner uprisings. She has declared that none of her vassals will give aid or shelter to anyone who seeks to encourage violent solutions to Concordia's political problems. Restrictions on commoners have increased in the Kingdom of Grass, and nobles have given notice to their subjects that any hint of rebellion will bring down the harshest penalties. On the other hand, faithful service will garner great rewards. Reaffirming her emphasis on the carrot rather than the stick, Queen Mary Elizabeth has promised titles to any commoners who swear binding oaths of loyalty to her. In this fashion, she hopes to co-opt any resistance, nipping it in the bud and transforming potential enemies into nobles with a vested interest in the status quo.

Kingdom of Northern Ice

Speculation runs rampant about Queen Laurel's Kingdom of Northern Ice. Many fae believe that her Shadow Court lover, Duke Rococo, has finally won her over to his cause and that together they plan an invasion of Tara-Nar. Others insist that Rococo has betrayed the Shadow Court and has joined with Queen Laurel to fight a war of liberation by invading Tara-Nar. So far, Queen Laurel has made no overtures to any of the current factions sparring for the empty throne, preferring to remain noncommittal for as long as possible.

Her hopes of remaining apart from open conflict may not last much longer, however. Already, changelings ousted from their freeholds in the Kingdom of Apples for failure to take the Oath of Loyal Affirmation now seek refuge—and sources of Glamour—in other lands. The proximity of the Kingdom of Northern Ice places it in an ideal position to receive these outcasts. Problems with roving bands of changeling raiders have increased tenfold since the outbreak of hostilities, and Queen Laurel must make some decisions regarding these incursions or else see her realm devolve into chaos.

Kingdom of the White Sands

Until recently, Queen Morgannn of White Sands has had few concerns beyond the borders of her realms. Keeping peace with the local nunnehi (a difficult task) and fending off pirate raids from the Fiefs of Bright Paradise have occupied far too much of her attention of late. The politics of Concordia hold little attraction for this sensual Gwydion monarch, who would rather encourage her constituency of artistically inclined subjects and their mortal Dreamers than observe the fine details of social protocol and political finesse.

The outbreak of war, however, has brought an air of uncertainty to the Kingdom of the White Sands. Attacks by nunnehi raiding parties have grown more frequent as the indigenous fae sense a great disturbance approaching the realms now held by the invaders and see the war as an opportunity to reclaim their ancient homelands. Moreover, pirate raids along the coastal regions have forced many freeholds to go on the defensive to avoid becoming objects of plunder. Morganna has met with her most accomplished knights and tacticians, charging them to come up with some means of ensuring that the Kingdom of White Sands does not become a stepping stone for invasion from seafaring raiders.

Kingdom of Pacifica

The Kingdom of Pacifica prides itself on its nonconformist views. Queen Aeron keeps an "open court" in which all fae, Seelie or Unseelie, commoner or noble, Kithain or Gallain, find welcome. How long this broadband egalitarianism can last in the face of the High King's disappearance, however, remains a matter for rampant speculation. David Ardry "sightings" have become a daily event in a realm where celebrities abound. Most fae dismiss such claims as wishful thinking or idle rumor, but the possibility that Pacifica harbors the missing king, either in accordance with or against his wishes, has led to numerous search missions by groups eager to rescue him.

In the meantime, the Unseelie influence in Pacifica—already an acknowledged power in Queen Aeron's court—increases. As the political situation tends more and more toward chaos and anarchy, many fae acknowledge that the time for Seelie orderliness and

traditionalism has come to an end. Count Vogon ap Ailil, the Unseelie faction's most outspoken and eloquent orator, himself a former Advocate to the defunct Parliament of Dreams, campaigns openly from his place at Queen Aeron's side for an end to the Seelie monopoly of Concordia's throne. Although he has not declared his candidacy, many fae believe that he supports High Lord Erdath as a potential successor to David Ardry. Always eager to embrace the most radical of causes, the changelings of Pacifica now agitate for a truly radical change in leadership. Whether or not they are willing to go to war for their beliefs remains uncertain.

Kingdom of the Burning Sun

House Gwydion's aberrant ruler Chief Greyhawk has vowed that the war will not affect his kingdom. Fearing a wave of refugees, changelings displaced from freeholds by one side or another, he has declared the Kingdom of the Burning Sun off-limits to any nonresident fae. He has given orders for his troops to close down the borders of his realm, and the local nunnehi have given their assistance to their ally. The High Queen visited Chief Greyhawk as part of her grand tour and received a cordial though not overly hospitable welcome. Soon after she departed, the Burning Sun's king announced his intention to turn away any changelings, commoners or nobles, who did not have his express permission to enter his realm.

This action sparked numerous rumors throughout the rest of Concordia. Some say that Chief Greyhawk holds King David prisoner and intends to force him to grant independence to his kingdom. Others claim that Greyhawk has invited the Shadow Court to use his land as a headquarters for their own move to take the throne of Concordia. Still other rumors say that Greyhawk plans to wait until the rest of Concordia lies in shambles from the war before he leads an army of nunnehi in a war of reconquest to take back the lands that once were theirs.



Kingdom of the Feathered Snake

The disappearance the High King may signal the death throes of Duke Topaz's rule. This troubled kingdom not only faces a full-scale uprising from the nunnehi of Mexico but also is a staging ground for Shadow Court activities. Duke Topaz has long relied on the backing of the High King, his patron and staunch ally, to help him keep control of his beleaguered lands. Now that David has vanished, the duke's many enemies have seized the moment. Suspicions abound that Chief Greyhawk has made an exception to his clampdown on border crossings to give nunnehi war parties fleeing Duke Topaz's knights a safe haven in his kingdom.

While he does not wish to commit himself to a war outside his realm when he has enough to worry about within his borders, Duke Topaz fears that he may soon have to seek alliances with other powerful nobles in Concordia. This course of action would almost certainly guarantee his involvement in the war.

Fiefs of Bright Paradise

These independent fiefdoms have ignored any claims made on them by Concordia since the end of the Accordance War, when many nobles and commoners alike fled the continent of North America for the relative isolation of the Caribbean islands. Free of the structures imposed by the High King, the tiny realms enjoy an unparalleled freedom dictated only by the whims and ethics of the fae who rule them. Dreams of piracy underpin many of these realms, and chimerical ships plough the seas of the Near Dreaming in search of treasure, slaves and mayhem—in no particular order.

The disappearance of the High King and the outbreak of war in Concordia has resulted in an increase in pirate raids on the coasts of both the Kingdom of White Sands and the Kingdom of Willows. Rumors that a pirate ship lay in wait on the night of the Boston Harbor Revels for the dross jettisoned by Fenarius and his rebels indicate some greater alliance between the Fiefs and at least some of the factions currently at war.

Beyond Concordia's Borders

The outbreak of war in one realm often leads to an epidemic of uprisings. Although the fae in other realms consider David Ardry as a king among many kings and queens, they acknowledge his accomplishments within Concordia and cite him as an example of kingly virtue and true nobility. His disappearance has sent a warning to many other lands and has sounded a challenge to some ambitious realms. While some realms outside the borders of Concordia remain as yet uninvolved or noncommittal, a few places have taken a keen interest in the developments.

Hibernia

The four monarchs of Hibernia feel a strong connection with the fae of Concordia. Since receiving the news of David Ardry's disappearance, Hibernia's changeling population has gone on the alert. Several nobles have made offers to send armies via trod or by more conventional means to assist in preserving order in the land or in searching for the missing king. The Unseelie fae of Hibernia, in particular, see an opportunity for them to strike a blow against the nobility in general. They reason that if the Seelie nobles travel en force to Concordia to lend their arms to one or more of the factions, Hibernia will be vulnerable to an Unseelie coup. Members of House Balor's more radical groups have already sent agents to scout out the lay of the land and determine whether or not they can add to the disorder in Concordia. By doing so they hope to ensure that the war in that realm will not soon come to an end.

The Isle of the Mighty

The lands of Caledonia, Albion and Cymru have responded with alarm and concern to the disappearance of the High King. The fae of Albion still struggle with factionalism; the various kingdoms lack clear leadership. Both Seelie and Unseelie courts see omens in the breakdown of order in Concordia, believing that this event presages the coming of Endless Winter. In Caledonia, King Ross of Dalriada worries that his commoners' subjects will mimic their counterparts in Concordia and foment trouble. He has taken care to protect himself from abduction or any other form of treachery to prevent his own disappearance. At the same time, Ross ap Gwydion

wonders whether Concordia's turmoil may provide him with the opportunity he needs to solidify his control over all of Caledonia. King Niail of Alba hopes to keep his kingdom out of any escalating global conflict but fears that an invasion by his rival, King Ross, may take that decision out of his hands. Queen Glynis of the Kingdom of Three Hills pursues her own course of action, attempting to ignore the strife that builds around her realm. The land of Cymru already stands on the verge of open war as pressures that have existed since the Resurgence come to a critical point. The outbreak of war in Concordia may provoke a similar response in Cymru, a land desperately seeking a High King of its own.

Iberia

The fae of the lands of the Iberian peninsula share the concerns of their neighbors—and sometime rivals—in Neustria over the upheaval in Concordia. Nobles and commoners have grown wary of each other as reports of the war make their way across the ocean. Long-standing accords between Iberian *sidhe* and their commoner subjects unravel in the wind of discord that blows over the land.

Neustria

The Kingdom of Neustria has taken great pains to ensure that the commoners who dwell within its borders do not get any ideas from events taking place in Concordia. Staunchly pro-monarchist, the nobles of Neustria have redoubled their efforts to solidify their control over the commoners even as they look over their shoulders at their neighbors, who stand ready to take advantage of any weakness. The fear that a Neustrian revolution may lurk just around the corner keeps many nobles on their toes.

The Galacian Confederation

Just as Neustria fears that the war in Concordia may spark a commoner uprising, the commoner leaders of the Galacian Confederation guard against an invasion by the nobles of other realms. The chaos that spreads through Concordia gives the Galacian Confederation some hope that the fae of Concordia may once and for all throw off their shackles and free themselves of rule by class rather than merit. Many commoners feel a kinship with their counterparts in Concordia, and a few groups have conducted *dross* collection drives to send precious Glamour to the Concordian rebels.

The Northern Realms

The fae of Scandinavia have managed to keep themselves aloof so far from the breakdown of Concordia and the subsequent disruptions of the European kingdoms. Their lorekeepers and *skaalds*, however, have received ominous signs from the Dreaming that their own time of trial and tribulation lies ahead. In the same fashion, the changelings who dwell in Russia and Eastern Europe feel a stirring in the Dreaming that surrounds their realms. Concordia's problems are only harbingers of things to come. The icy winds of the steppes cry out, "Beware," and the changelings of that ancient and majestic land wait in fear and trepidation for what the Dreaming may send their way.

The Isles of the Wandering Dream

The Kithain of Australia and New Zealand have their share of problems between commoners and nobles. The Resurgence upset long-standing patterns in these lands, just as it did throughout the rest of the world. Though many conflicts stemming from the return of the *sidhe* three decades ago have come to successful resolutions, a few old wounds still fester. The uprising in Concordia has reawakened some of the old feuds and polarized the changeling population in ways that bode ill for the future.

Lands of Ancient Mysteries

The fae of Africa have held themselves aloof from the Kithain of the rest of the world since their first disastrous experiences with the coming of the Europeans. Though some *eshu* have made a pilgrimage to the land that gave birth to their kith, few changelings know the real state of affairs in the lands that saw the dreams of the pharaohs and the wonders of Great Zimbabwe. What effect the conflict in Concordia has on these enigmatic fae remains clouded.

In the same fashion, the fae of the Middle Eastern realms remain uninvolved in the affairs of western Kithain. Though they do not solicit visitors from other lands, the Middle Eastern fae of the Caliphate of Cedars, the Sultanate of Hejaz and the Empire of the Caucasus provide gracious, though distant, hospitality to changeling who journey to their realms. The rulers of these lands have, however, made it clear that they wish to have nothing to do with the disturbances caused by the Concordians' inability to control their baser passions.



CHAPTER TWO: FIELDS OF BATTLE AND PLACES OF REFUGE

The Kingdom of Apples

I wandered for thousands of miles among the mountains, along the sea plains, up in the Piedmont. I found another country . . . unknown to most trawlers and understood only by those who lived there.

—David Yeadon, *Hidden Corners of the Mid-Atlantic States*

Setting the Stage for the War of Dreams

The Kingdom of Apples comprises all of New England (Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut and Rhode Island) and the upper mid-Atlantic states of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Ruled by Queen Mab of House Fiona from her freehold of Caer Palisades, this wealthy and powerful kingdom benefits from the many centers of population, learning and culture within its borders. Additionally, the Kingdom of Apples serves as the home of

the High King's palatial freehold of Tara-Nar, his winter court and the Parliament of Dreams. Understandably, the residents of Good Queen Mab's domain consider themselves central to the dream of Concordia.

The following guide to places in the Kingdom of Apples does not pretend to cover all the duchies or even the majority of its freeholds. The places mentioned here provide a sampling of locations that have experienced the early stages of war. Storytellers should feel free to create additional sites or make changes to the ones detailed here.

Duchy of the Golden Sigil (New York)

The Duchy of the Golden Sigil got its name from the document written in golden ink given to Duke Kelodin when he became the elected ruler of the duchy. Signed by the other nobles of the duchy as well as Queen Mab and

High King David, the parchment affirms Kelodin as duke and enumerates his responsibilities to those under his rule. Framed in gold and velvet, the document hangs above Kelodin's ducal throne in his freehold of Wyntersnow in Buffalo. One of the main negotiated points in Kelodin's rule was his agreement to settle his court in Buffalo, thus leaving New York City for the High King's winter court. A troll grump, Kelodin is one of the most visible commoner nobles in Concordia, as he controls quite a large duchy and manages to remain on good terms with Mab, David and Morwyn as well as some fairly radical commoners, not always an easy task. A consummate diplomat as well as a highly respected warrior, Duke Kelodin also keeps a secondary freehold in Manhattan. From there he can participate in the vibrant, artistic life of the city, yet he is always careful to give pride of place to Homefires, David Ardry's winter court. Some of the nobles who reside in the duchy (most notably Count Maldiset of House Dougal, who feels a Gwydion ought to rule as duke) resent owing fealty to a commoner-noble, yet those who feel this way have come to power more recently than the duke himself. The duke is in the unenviable position of trying to rule a duchy rife with factions. It has proven to be impossible to curb all of them, with the result that dozens of small groups of disaffected fae now roam New York City and other centers of changeling population, engaging in battles whenever they find one another in close proximity.

Tara-Nar

High King David's splendid fortress, set amid the Catskill Mountains, serves as his official residential palace and as a showcase for the aspirations and dreams David Ardry held for the kingdom he was to rule. Though created atop a grand lodge, the chimerical aspects of Tara-Nar present a facade more reminiscent of the high turreted, delicately spired fairy tale castles of France. Its pale, almost translucent-looking walls reflect the changing colors of lake, sky and mountain as clouds and sun, rain and snow create a succession of patterns in them, from the rippling of rain-dappled water to the lacy patterns of autumn leaves tossed by the wind. Placed atop a rise in the center of a small mountain lake, the fortress, protected by its moat and reachable only via a stone causeway, seems like a castle out of legend. With the rise of Tara-Nar, visitors to the area have begun to refer to the

heretofore nameless water as Kingslake. Pennants depicting the house emblems of all the known noble houses (including the Unseelie ones) and the symbols of each kith decorate the turrets and hang as banners in the great audience hall.

Surrounding the palace are formal gardens and a large field where jousts and fairs are held and the Red Branch knights train. A stable complex, mews and a kennel complete the picture. Faerie steeds, faerie hounds and a selection of hunting hawks occupy these buildings alongside a few more exotic chimera (most notably, the High King's griffin). Other chimera can be found throughout the palace, while the four dragons that provide aerial protection for the castle live atop the structure, each with its own tower.

Tara-Nar boasts dozens of rooms, halls and staircases, with accommodations for several hundred. Those who provide service in the castle live there year-round, necessitating particularly large pantries and storage areas so they can withstand the winter without needing to leave the fortress. Many courtiers take advantage of the sumptuous quarters provided within Tara-Nar during spring, summer and autumn court, then visit the winter court of Homefires for the Yule celebrations. The core members of the court—High King David, High Queen Faerilyth, Morwyn, Lenore and their guards and personal servants—spend varying amounts of time at Tara-Nar. Morwyn has her own freehold, Grayfern, nearer to Manhattan, and lives there when she is not needed to fulfill her duties as David's most trusted seneschal. Lenore spends about three-quarters of her time at Tara-Nar with the other part spent at Queen Mab's palace, Caer Palisades. Red Branch knights, who take turns guarding the nobles who rule Concordia, also reside at court while they provide that service, then return to their own freeholds for the rest of the year. A smattering of court artists find welcome at Tara-Nar as well.

The heart of the freehold is the grand audience hall. High King David's throne, a massive chair of carved and faceted clear crystal shot through with veins of gold, lies atop a green carpeted dais three steps above the floor. In recent times, a second throne, this one of pale gray crystal with silver flecks, has been set beside David's throne. High Queen Faerilyth has occupied the throne only once, on her wedding day. Aside from hearing cases and greeting visitors, David uses the audience hall as a ball-

room, impromptu council chamber and game room for the childlings at court. Centrally located in the floor of the great hall is a large, circular stone carved all over with scenes of changeling activities. The stone can be raised at need, allowing access via a circular stairway into the underground area of the keep where the Well of Fire lies. It is said that the day on which David came to Tara-Nar to take up his throne and his duties as High King, the well's balefire spontaneously burst into flame. This fire is the source of all balefires in Concordia, since they are renewed once a year by special couriers called firebrands, who set out on Midwinter's Night to carry the flame to distant freeholds throughout the kingdom. Raising the stone requires the strength of six strong people. The honor of being among those allowed to raise the stone is usually reserved for Red Branch knights and the Trueheart Brigade, David's personal guard-servants consisting of four trolls, all of whom have been knighted and elevated to the title of baron for their service to the king. Plans were made to create a similar force of female trolls for High Queen Faerilyth, but such plans have been put on hold with the disappearance of David.

The privy council chamber lies to the right of the audience hall, while the state feast hall is located to the left. Directly behind the throne, hidden behind a tapestry of David's personal coat of arms, is a secret passage that leads directly to David's bedroom suite. What was once Morwyn's suite has more recently been redecorated for Faerilyth, and a connecting door was created between her sitting room and David's. Morwyn has now moved to a suite on another hall. To sweeten the move, David arranged for Morwyn's room to face a private, enclosed garden where her chimera, a silver-white unicorn, lives. Lenore's room was recently renovated as well, redecorated to reflect her tastes as an accomplished wilder who has grown beyond the storybook surroundings of a Childlingprincess.

A spiral staircase leads down from the privy council chambers and into an underground room decorated with several beautiful watercolor landscapes. All sorts of scenes are depicted, from a lovely white sand beach to an evergreen-covered mountain. Each is actually a trod to a different kingdom within Concordia. Though they lead to outdoor areas close to each ruler's freehold, none opens directly into such strongholds. A wine-colored velvet door opens onto a trod that leads to David's winter court in Manhattan.

Across the hall from the throne room lies an equally large area devoted to showcasing changelings' and mortal artists' masterworks. Known simply as "the gallery," it plays host to a wealth of wonders. Sculptures, paintings, tapestries, rugs, and other visual media occupy places where they can most easily be viewed and appreciated. Musicians and singers render original works, poets declaim and players present both classic and new dramas and comedies within this hall. At the far side of the gallery, a set of silvery doors leads to the realm in the Dreaming where the other half of Tara-Nar is located.

Tara-Nar's Dreamrealm half echoes its Autum World presence but contains elements impossible to achieve outside the Dreaming. Peacocks with glowing plumage strut through the gardens, which feature foliage never seen on earth. The castle itself rises gloriously, with its spiraling towers reaching upward to touch a cloud realm overhead where winged steeds await riders to race across the billowy landscape. From one end of the clouds, a silvery waterfall flows down to create a sparkling blue pool. Day- and night-blooming flowers scent the air, and flocks of chimera populate the grounds and raise their voices in trilling song.

The grand hall features High King David's Falcon Throne, a magnificent creation of brilliant, sparkling diamond. The falcon's head rises behind the king, and its wings are fashioned to fan out to the sides to frame him, then curve inward to provide armrests. The throne appeared of its own accord when David Ardry first stepped into the grand hall. No throne for Faerilyth has appeared as yet, a telling point that Morwyn emphasizes as evidence that the Dreaming does not accept David's wife as a true High Queen. In fairness, however, Faerilyth has never entered the room after being crowned, so whether the Dreaming would acknowledge her or not is in dispute. The fire that burns beneath this portion of Tara-Nar imparts a subtle glow to the entire structure. Fanning outward from the gardens are three silver paths that lead into other locations deeper in the Dreaming. The left-hand path leads to a homestead where many of the artisans who serve the High King keep workshops. The right-hand path leads through a fabulous forest where the royal court stages hunts, and on to the great fortress of Rivenwood, the headquarters of the Red Branch knights in the Dreaming. The middle path, known as the King's Hope, has supposedly never been

walked. Tales speak of the King's Hope as a path to be walked only by the High King in the time of his realm's greatest need. No one knows where the path leads or what treasure might be found or sacrifice required at its end. Some speculate that David Ardry has already walked the path once, during the final days of the Accordance War, and that he found Caliburn at the path's end, making him High King and allowing him to bring an end to the war. In latter days, rumor persists that if David did walk the path and acquire his sword there, he also learned that he would be required to give up his kingship and fade into obscurity, making room for one greater than he to rule and lead all changelings through Endless Winter.

This was Tara-Nar at its best. Since David Ardry's disappearance, the gardens have turned brown and the reflections in the castle walls have dulled to a mottled gray. Both thrones remain empty, with Morwyn pointedly not occupying them, but utilizing a high-backed chair set at the base of the dais. All but the most fanatic Morwynists have deserted the court as battle and their own candidates for rulership call them elsewhere. Within the Dreaming, Tara-Nar remains shrouded in silence. Those who pass through the halls report that all seems ghostly and insubstantial. Cracks have appeared in the silver paths leading to Rivenwood and the workshops, while King's Hope has taken on a somewhat tarnished hue. Rumors have begun spreading outward to other kingdoms that anyone wishing to claim the throne must walk that path and accept its dangers if he is to have any chance of reuniting the shattered Kingdom of Concordia. Though some whisper that David himself waits at the path's end to crown the new-come king, few believe that any longer. To most fae, Tara-Nar has become a fortress serving the interests of the Morwynists. Whatever it once meant in terms of a unifying edifice of hope has faded in the wake of the war.

The Hall of Advocates

Home to the Parliament of Dreams, this stately hall lies just to the west of Tara-Nar. Occupying its own small island in Kingslake, the hall may be reached via a short causeway from the shore or from a carved, arched wooden bridge located behind Tara-Nar and stretching across a lily garden. The bridge brings one to the hall's second

floor, which contains a sweeping balcony that overlooks the parliamentary hall as well as a series of sitting rooms where members of the parliament may meet privately with messengers, visitors from home or other advocates to discuss votes or plan speeches.

The lower floor is entirely given over to a grand lobby and the hall itself. The lobby is decorated with a tile floor depicting a silver path leading through various landscapes worked into the walls: a primeval forest, a field of golden flowers, a rocky mountain pass and a swirling sea. Golden doors at the end of the lobby open into the Hall of Advocates. Inside, the hall forms a semicircle, with a graceful curve of comfortable chairs for the delegates sweeping down from the entryway and descending to a small stage where the speaker's dais rests. Letters carved into the balcony's face reveal the following message: "The Parliament of Dreams. Let all who come here do so as equals. Let all who speak here do so in good fellowship. Let all who leave here do so in peace."

Since the breaking of the parliament, someone has gouged out the word "peace" and rudely carved in the word "pieces"—a sad commentary on the breaking of both the parliament and the kingdom.

Homefires: The Winter Court of High King David

Cozily tucked away inside a tenant-owned Manhattan brownstone that serves as an artists' colony for the residents is Homefires, High King David's winter court. Along the second floor hallway lies a highly polished wooden door that leads into a particularly large apartment. The residence belongs to David Ardry and serves as his winter court during the months when the Berkshires become difficult to reach because of heavy snows.

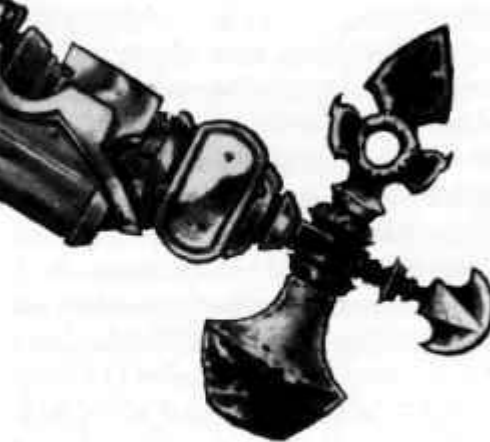
The apartment itself is simply yet tastefully furnished in greens and golds, showing Morwyn's talent for stylish decor. With four bedrooms, a formal dining room and sumptuous baths, the apartment almost seems regal enough for holding court. Its main fault is that the apartment itself isn't big enough to accommodate all those who want to speak with the High King. Usually, David, Morwyn, Lenore and a few guards and servants



live in the apartment during the coldest months of the year.

Leading out of an apparently solid wall in the formal dining room is a double doorway visible only to changelings. It opens onto a short trod connected to a fabulous homestead. Though not the equal of Tara-Nar, the minipalace, called Homefires, provides shelter for those visiting court as well as an audience hall and a great hall for feasts and royal entertainment. Though he is most associated with Tara-Nar, David's heart has always been more given to Homefires. Here the High King can relax more, and here he kept the Yule Festival.

Since David's disappearance, only a skeleton staff occupies Homefires, a few servants and guards who hold the residence in the name of the High King. The place seems deserted and sad, an empty theatre awaiting players to bring it to life. Without David to do so, however,



the homestead may gradually fade into obscurity. Morwyn will not leave Tara-Nar for fear Faerilyth may try to occupy the throne in her absence. If Yule Court is held at all, it will be in that palace fortress, not in the comfortable halls of Homefires.

Goblin Town

Located beneath Manhattan Island and coexisting in tenuous harmony with the High King's winter court of Homefires, Goblin Town serves as a font of nocker creativity and, many suspect, baser motives.

Nevertheless, since the Accordance War, Goblin Town has established its own "accord" with its neighbors in the winter court. Rumors that the residents of Goblin Town had a hidden hand in the death of Duke Dafyll and the rise of David Ardry persist despite denials on all fronts.

Since the High King's disappearance, the Kithain of Goblin Town have grown wary of what the future holds for them. The loss of the High King's tolerant patronage leaves them open to attack by many enemies, foremost among them the Traditionalists of the Beltaine Blade, who hold Goblin Town responsible for most of the ills in the Kingdom of Apples, if not in all of Concordia. The exposure a few years ago of the corruption of Goblin Town's previous leader, Cadmium Redd, and that nefarious individual's subsequent flight and reputed transformation into one of the Dauntain, have only added to the atmosphere of paranoia that surrounds the freehold's residents.

While Goblin Town enjoys superior defenses and has little fear of invasion by an army of any size, the freehold does worry that it may come under siege and become isolated from potential allies. To this end, emissaries from Goblin Town have initiated efforts to make contact with other freeholds and establish a network of communication, including the creation of underground supply routes. Unfortunately, old grudges possess half-lives of nuclear proportions, and many freeholds in the Kingdom of Apples would not mind seeing Goblin Town brought low. Baron Isaac Glass, the freehold's Master Builder, has found the task of forming alliances with other fae a difficult one, and he fears that thenockers of Goblin Town may have to swallow their considerable pride and make unheard of concessions to achieve a modicum of safety. Glass fears that Cadmium Redd may use the state of war as an opportunity to insinuate spies and infiltrators into her old haunt. Glass has feverishly spent the years since her flight rebuilding the outer defenses so as to prevent her from using her knowledge of Goblin Town's structure to her advantage.

Meanwhile, as the master plan laid out in the seventeenth century by nocker architect and metaphysician Doctor Zachary Tapp nears completion, the dark entity that lives at the center of the freehold's underground core, the Black Crystal Caverns, stirs with an ancient and implacable hunger. The residents of Goblin Town grow

edgier and more susceptible to hallucinations, and they find that many new chimera have appeared within the labyrinthine halls and passages of the freehold, apparently the product of some hideous mind's spontaneous generation.

Numerous reconnaissance teams from several changeling factions have recently made forays into Manhattan's underground, hoping to discover a way to gain access to Goblin Town. None of those teams has emerged. The freehold hovers on the brink of mass hysteria because of rumors that a crack squad of assassins led by one of House Balor's most covert operatives plans an assault on Goblin Town through a trod known only to them. Other rumors hint that David Ardry languishes in a prison in the depths of Goblin Town, leading to sporadic attempts by unfortunate would-be-heroes to rescue the missing king. The residents of Goblin Town hardly know what to believe, except that, as usual, they stand alone against the whole of changeling society.

See **Freeholds and Hidden Glens** and **Kithbook: Nockers** for more information on Goblin Town and its inhabitants.

Duchy of Gardens (New Jersey)

Duke Marcurian of House Dougal rules the Duchy of Gardens from his freehold estate near Newark. Called the Greenery, the estate consists of an old, walled garden that has fallen into ruin and a greenhouse missing several glass panes. At least, that's its Autumn World appearance. Its chimerical aspect is quite different. The gateway opens onto a cornucopia of marvelous blooms—flowers, trees, bushes and grasses with vivid hues and sweet scents. A meandering path leads to the greenhouse, which boasts a pond and small waterfall as well as hundreds of hothouse plants. A glass door leads into the rest of the freehold. Duke Marcurian is well suited to dealing with this duchy where many, manynockers live. While he appreciates machinery and industrial aspects of his duchy, the duke also hopes to keep many parts of it green as well. He has had to put his aspirations for his duchy on hold because of the war. With Queen Mab's freehold within the borders of his duchy, he has found it most politic to

agree with her policies. Unfortunately, this means his holdings have become targets for those supporting Faerilyth or other candidates as well as commoners hoping to overthrow the sidhe who come to the nockers for war machines. Recently, the duke has defeated an attempt on his life and uncovered a plot to kidnap Lenore from Caer Palisades. He hopes this will quell other plots but realizes he may be falsely optimistic.

Caer Palisades: The Apples' Court

Built near the famous Palisades Park, Caer Palisades has benefited from the dreams and creative energies surrounding the amusements there. Once the home of a plethora of rides and the stage for A-list entertainers, the park closed several years ago to make way for high-rise apartments. Despite the Banalizing of the area, Mab's palace, created to echo the park's amusements, sustains that Glamour within its walls. As home to the Queen of Apples, Caer Palisades is expected to be a grand hall, and it is. Four trods lead from the structure to Tara-Nar, Caer Lune (a minor freehold of Mab's) and two other locations Mab has yet to reveal to anyone. Stately walls hold stained-glass windows depicting the virtues of knight-hood and the joys of courtly love. Furnished in dark woods and tapestries, the main portion of the palace hardly seems a likely site for amusement. Nonetheless, behind a set of silvery doors carved with fabulous mythical animals lies a small scale replica of some of the park's best rides and diversions, including a carousel and Ferris wheel sized for a smaller patrons. This part of the castle provided many hours of fun for David and Morwyn when they first sheltered with Mab, and even the most staid courtier or visitor may find himself putting aside his grand airs to experience one or another of the rides,

Currently, Mab finds that even her magnificent view of Manhattan palls in the face of the problems besetting her realm. As Queen of Apples, she is concerned with the effect of the war on all the duchies under her care. While she gives verbal support to Morwyn in her intention to hold the throne for David, Mab has also offered shelter to Lenore, who has become a focal point for those seeking a candidate to place on the throne. Because of her balancing act in this regard, Mab cannot leave Caer Palisades except to meet an opposing army bent on attacking her lands. With the dissolution of the Parlia-

ment of Dreams and the feud between Morwyn and Faerilyth, Mab now represents the single greatest figure of stability in the kingdom. Some believe that so long as Caer Palisades stands and so long as Mab rules the Kingdom of Apples, some mirth will remain, Banality cannot triumph and the war will eventually play itself out.

Duchy of Liberty's Heart (Pennsylvania)

The Duchy of Liberty's Heart encompasses Pennsylvania. Duke Allenion of House Gwydion is well liked and holds the trust of most of the changelings of the duchy. His ducal freehold, known as Hearts-ease, occupies a large building near the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Through careful diplomacy, the duke has managed to avoid openly supporting any of the factions scrambling for power. He knows such luck will not continue, and already some battles beyond his control have rocked his duchy. Pennsylvania holds many monuments that underline the folly of civil war, a telling lesson the duke understands all too well. He is very reluctant to join in what seems an even greater tragedy in the making than the Accordance War. Soon he will have to decide whether he will move to quell disturbances in his duchy or hope that by not responding, he can encourage others to find peaceful solutions,

Duchy of Stonecoast (Maine)

The Duchy of Stonecoast is ruled by Duchess Ylenaria of House Eiluned. Ylenaria is a scholar whose freehold of Writer's Cove in Portland has become a haven for aspiring writers as well as those who appreciate antique books. The duchess is a Traditionalist who rules her duchy with an iron hand encased in velvet, so long as challenges are respectful. Her duchy isn't largely populated despite its size. Most residents, especially those who lodge at Writer's Cove, are academics. The duchess unswervingly supports Morwyn's position of holding the throne for David and would support her in any bid for power. Her support is based in her respect for tradition and her desire to see the matter settled with as little chaos as possible.

Duchy of Freewill

(New Hampshire)

The changelings who live in the Duchy of Freewill, which corresponds to the state of New Hampshire, are fiercely proud of their independent-minded duke, Garan of House Fiona. The duke's Concord freehold, known as Freeheart, is an open haven where all are welcome and anyone can speak her mind. This has proven to be a two-edged (well, multiedged) sword, as supporters of all the factions as well as anarchists and nihilists have come to Freeheart to argue their case and try to gain the duke's support for their cause. Garan has thus far remained neutral despite some fairly impassioned speeches and mudslinging. He knows he cannot stop this inundation by all the factions without trampling on the very foundation of his leadership of Freewill. Yet it's only a matter of time until the enforced neutrality he requires of those who come to his duchy gives way to battle as impassioned as the speeches preceding it.

Duchy of Maples

(Vermont)

This scenic duchy encompasses Vermont, known for its beautiful landscapes and sugar maples. Unlike many of the northern duchies, Maple's ducal freehold doesn't lie within a large urban area, but among its most lovely scenery. The freehold of Greenbranch, home to Duchess Caerendlith of House Gwydion, is located on the northern tip of the Green Mountain National Forest. Caerendlith prefers to lead by example rather than imposing rulership with a heavy hand, though in recent months, she has been beset by those who find her duchy's relative isolation a good staging ground for their factions' armies. The duchess holds onto hope that High King David will return. Until he does, she supports High Queen Faerilyth's claim, a decision that has caused Morwyn to treat her fellow Gwydion as a traitor.

Mountain Dreams Stables

Located in central Vermont's rural backcountry, near the Green Mountains, the Mountain Dreams Stables provides tourists with idyllic and challenging weekend horseback outings. In addition, the small but thriving

business breeds, shows and occasionally sells a variety of purebred riding horses, including the stocky, shaggy Icelandic ponies so beloved by cross-country riders. The Evans family, owners and operators, treat their visitors and clients with courtesy and cordiality but save their real affection for the creatures they raise and for one another.

While mortals see the well-kept, spacious stables; paddocks; training rings and the modest house that serves as a combination family residence and bed-and-breakfast establishment, Kithain who travel to Mountain Dreams Stables enjoy a very different experience.

Mountain Dreams exists in both the mortal world and in the Near Dreaming. As a freehold held by Sir Evern ap Scathach and his kinain family, the chimerical aspect of the house, stables and grounds depicts a very different landscape. Kithain and enchanted visitors gain access to a realm that includes an Icelandic great hall as well as a craggy expanse of towering forests, rocky ascents and icy cold mountain streams. A few trusted fae, all members of the Riders of the Midnight Trods, see yet a third level to the freehold: a nexus of trods that connect to various parts of the Kingdom of Apples. Long a jealously guarded secret by Sir Evern's line of House Scathach, these trods now serve as the secret pathways used by the Riders to carry their messages and news throughout the realm.

Duchy of Pewter

(Massachusetts)

Ruled by Duchess Peraniya of House Ailil from her freehold of Oldenwaye in Ipswich, this is the only duchy in the Kingdom of Apples to claim a ruler from one of the Unseelie houses. Bedeviled by conflicting claimants (most notably Duke Tymon of Boston), the duchess relies on personal charisma to bring supporters to her court. The duchess was granted the duchy by act of the Parliament of Dreams just a month before David's disappearance, and she is still trying to consolidate her rule of the area. Thus far, she has been unsuccessful in attempts to retake Boston. The duchess is in the unenviable position of being a radical in an area populated by both fanatically traditional nobles and ultraradical commoners (with a

few crossovers just to make things interesting). The nobles try to ignore or unseat her since they resent being ruled by an Unseelie, while the commoners prove unwilling to look beyond her kith and see her actual politics.

Duchy of Sails (Rhode Island)

Duke Larys of House Fiona rules his small duchy from Seaspray, his freehold that looks out over the ocean. Despite its small size in terms of land area, the Duchy of Sails claims a large changeling population. Larys himself supports any notion to award the throne of Concordia to Queen Mab, arguing that David Ardry would not have even become High King without Mab's support, guidance and willingness to shelter David and Morwyn from the worst excesses of the Accordance War. In the true tradition of expressing opinions freely, however, it almost seems as though each and every changeling in the duchy has a different idea about who should rule and how—and they aren't shy about bickering with others about it. Those seeking followers for any given faction have only to travel to the Duchy of Sails to find them. The emphasis on sailing here also has provided many seaborne troops for raids along the coast. Protests from other duchies to Duke Larys meet with no success, however, for he claims not to know about any of these raids. Despite his denials, sluagh observers have recently noted an upsurge of Glamour in the area and attribute it to the duchy's dross pirates.

Duchy of Fair Winds (Delaware)

Once noted as a vibrant, if small, duchy, Fair Winds has entered a state of stagnant waiting. Duchess Linnielle of House Eiluned has closed her freehold of Windhoven in Newcastle to anyone but her immediate court in the wake of the assassination of her love, Sir Sherard, by commoners who then attempted to storm her home. Several of her guards died in the assault, though they just managed to beat off the assailants. Now she finds herself and her guards cut off in an isolated freehold while commoner bands roam the duchy looking for spoils or

opponents to fight. Unknown to Linnielle, the Shadow Court quietly set up a stronghold here and recruited heavily. Now they seek to take the duchy. Linnielle has sent word to Morwyn that she is under siege, but with other battles and other sieges demanding Morwyn's attention, it is doubtful she will be able to offer the help the duchess needs.

Commonwealth of Hope's Boundary (Connecticut)

Just as someone can look down from Yale University in any direction and see that much of New Haven exists at near poverty level, so was the Duchy of Mirrors, where the line between nobles and commoners was distinct and rigorously upheld by Duke Rialdo of House Gwydion. Fed up with his policies and freed from any pretense by the start of the War of Dreams, the commoners banded together to overthrow the unpopular duke. In his place, they elected a "governor" to rule the duchy according to the wishes of a representative council elected by town meetings. Governor Zharkis is a satyr grump who earned his appointment from years of impassioned speeches urging equality. Now he has the chance to show what a duchy ruled by democracy can do. His first act as governor was to preside over renaming the former duchy the Commonwealth of Hope's Boundary.

Places of Safety

As the war spreads throughout the Kingdom of Apples, a few freeholds struggle to hold onto their neutrality, providing places of respite for both sides in the midst of growing animosity and intolerance. Though these safeholds are few in number and seem unlikely to retain their neutral status for much longer, they currently serve as rare meeting places for members of opposing factions who still hold out some hope for a speedy end to the conflict.



Everheart Gallery

Located in Greenwich Village, the Everheart Gallery contains exhibitions of contemporary and modern art created by changeling artists and many of their Dreamers. The gallery's main room, accessible from the street and frequented by Kithain as well as mortal art aficionados, features paintings, sculptures and mixed-media compositions that portray the hidden side of the everyday world. A graceful *trompe l'oeil* painting at the back wall of the gallery depicts an archway opening onto a vista of an idyllic landscape. For Kithain, this painting provides access into the freehold that lies beyond the main gallery.

The gallery-behind-the gallery holds works of art that speak primarily to changelings. Lately, many of these works have reflected their artists' concerns with the prevailing atmosphere of war and uncertainty within Kithain society. Textures, colors and compositions combine in sublime and often bizarre images that indicate their creators' attempt to transform the current unrest into artistic visions. One particular artist, a sidhe of House Fiona, speaks of the death of chivalry in a series of paintings of mounted knights fighting losing battles against nightmarish dragons with mechanical heads or bodies made of computer circuitry. Another group of paintings, entitled "The Coming Storms," by a satyr specializing in abstract art, traverses the spectrum of colors and emotions, from dark, vibrant colors that swirl about one another in textured layers to lighter, shimmering tones that evoke more hopeful emotions despite their frenetic activity.

Evianna ni Fiona, the owner of the gallery, has tried to preserve a neutral atmosphere within the halls of her freehold. Visitors are welcome to discuss the political upheaval and dispute one another in an atmosphere of cultural exchange. Lady Evianna hopes that her freehold may continue to serve as a meeting place where changelings of different persuasions can meet without rancor and find common ground for negotiations.

Monarch, Virginia

Monarch lies in the northern part of Virginia, along the Atlantic coast, fairly near to Washington, D.C. The town is host to the Monarch School of the Arts, a college focused on the arts and liberal education. Dozens of changelings (sidhe and commoners) live in this small

town and work at the college. Many more attend or teach at the school. The Court of Monarch claims to be a small duchy encompassing the town, the lands around it for ten miles and an island off the coast known as Breakers Isle. Monarch has remained determinedly neutral, perhaps because of the shared power of the Seelie and Unseelie Courts there. Duchess Sariona of House Fiona acts as the Seelie ruler and as dean of the college, while Duke Rendarien of House Eiluned represents the Unseelie Court and lives on Breakers Isle. At one time the two were married, but with the kidnapping of their only child, they came to a parting of ways. Today, they offer asylum to changelings fleeing the ravages of the war and welcome any who agree to refrain from conflict while within the duchy.



CHAPTER THREE: CHILDREN OF WAR AND PEACE PEOPLE

*Swear by those horsemen, by those women,
Complexion and form prove superhuman,
That pale, long visaged company
That airs an immortality
Completeness of their passions won;
Now they ride the wintry dawn
—William Butler Yeats, "Under Ben Bulbin"*

New Dreams

With the outbreak of war, new heroes and villains have made their mark on Kithain society. Some have risen to greatness or notoriety thanks to their conscious involvement in recent events in Concordia. Others have fallen into their positions of prominence through accident or happenstance. This gallery of notables does not present an exhaustive list of changeling luminaries but provides instead a few examples of individuals for Storytellers to include in their chronicles. Feel free to add to this list as you see fit or to discard any of the figures who don't seem suitable to your stories.

Adama, General of the Army of the Dreaming

Growing up in Boston's Roxbury district, Adam Sowande learned early that he needed to stand tall and proud in order to survive in a harsh world of racial stereotypes. Adam's parents impressed on their son, the oldest of four children, the importance of honoring his African heritage. Unfortunately, Adam's father died unexpectedly from a massive coronary. Adam, at fourteen, assumed the responsibilities of a man. Adam's mother refused to let her son quit school to work full time, insisting that an education was more important than a



few more dollars. As a result, Adam saw his mother take on two jobs, wearing herself out before she was forty.

Adam excelled in school despite the stresses of his home life and the pressures from his inner-city peers. His studious nature came to the attention of college recruiters, who urged him to apply for an academic scholarship. The summer before he would have gone to Boston University, Adam attended a celebration of African

American culture. During a particularly inspiring dance presentation, Adam found himself caught up in the pounding rhythms and brilliant colors. Soon he plunged deep into his Chrysalis.

The head of the dance company, waiting in the wings as his troupe brought its performance to a climax, felt the explosion of Glamour in the audience and sought out its source. Thus, Adam came under the protection of Michael Nangila and learned about his second heritage—being an eshu.

Instead of attending Boston University, Adam informed his mother, to her dismay and great disappointment, that he was joining Nangila's dance company as a member of the support staff. For the next year, Adam traveled across the United States—or, rather, across the Kingdom of Concordia—receiving an education not usually found in college. From his exposure to the many kingdoms of the fae, Adam, who now called himself Adama, learned the histories of many kith and soon acquired a formidable collection of stories from many cultures.

The more information he gathered about fae society, however, the more Adama perceived the inequities between commoners and nobles. He grew disheartened with the realization that even the society of the children of the Dreaming suffered from the same petty prejudices and bigoted attitudes as the world of mortals.

His innate ability to assess situations and people manifested itself not long after Adama's rude awakening. He sensed a growing fractiousness within the fabric of fae society. The young eshu knew that before long, the delicate balance between nobles and commoners would dissolve. Whenever he slept, Adama dreamed of war.

Believing that the Dreaming had chosen him as a vessel, Adama left the dance company and, to the surprise of everyone who knew him, enlisted in the army. For the next four years, he studied the science of war, absorbing everything he could about military history, battle tactics and the art of inspiring troops to give their life for a cause. At the end of his term of service, Adama left the army and returned to the world of the fae.

The next year, David Ardry disappeared. Within a year and a day, Concordia found itself in the midst of a war with many sides, and Adama found himself thrust into the position of military leader for the Armies of the Dreaming.

Image: Adama stands well over 6 feet tall, with ebony skin, powerful shoulders and a trim, warrior's build. His face, all sharp angles and planes, bears the mark of nobility. His dark eyes regard everyone he sees with a calculation borne from years of practice assessing an individual's potential as either an ally or a foe. In his fae form, Adama's eshu nature comes to the fore; he is even taller and slimmer, though he maintains his regal presence. He favors ethnic African attire, though he does not adhere to any single tribal finery but prefers to borrow from the styles of many nations. He enjoys wearing elaborate headdresses in order to add to his stature and draw attention to himself. He carries a slim spear with runic-looking etchings on the spearhead that suggest the weapon serves a ceremonial as well as a practical purpose.

Roleplaying Hints: The Dreaming has chosen you for a key part in this enormous conflict. Although you have not had actual combat experience, your stint in the military—dictated by your kith's birthright, you now believe—has given you some of the skills that you need to direct the motley army of commoners who seek a better life. You have a keen mind, and your association with Nangila's dance company, not to mention your time in the army, has honed your body to a fine pitch. Sometimes you feel that you are not up to the task of leading your troops to victory, but you know that you must not allow anyone to doubt your ability. Force yourself to exude confidence and inspiration, even when you do not feel it yourself. You walk in the footsteps of heroes. You must be worthy of those who have gone before you.

Story Connection: Characters may encounter General Adama either as an inspiring commanding officer (if they actually join the Army of the Dreaming) or as an implacable though honorable foe (if they oppose the commoner movement). Adama may prove to be an ally or an enemy, depending on the characters' allegiances.

Rowena the Just, Leader of the Riders of the Midnight Trods

From her childhood, Rowena Evans knew that she carried fae blood within her veins. Her father, himself a knight of House Scathach, raised his only daughter in the knowledge that one day she, too, might evince the



fullness of her dual nature as both human vessel and fae spirit. In the meantime, Rowena spent her days, when she was not in school, helping out in her family's business, the Mountain Dreams Stables, located in rural Vermont.

Rowena experienced her Chrysalis at the age of ten, when she witnessed the birth of the Icelandic foal promised to her by her parents. Like Rowena, Fyrelight bore faerie blood, and the emergence of the Glamour-filled colt into the world triggered Rowena's own awareness of her faerie self.

As she grew older, Rowena took on more and more responsibility for training the horses her parents raised. At the same time as she learned the ins and outs of riding, she also studied mounted combat maneuvers and other skills necessary to a knight of the Kingdom of Apples. When she passed from childling to wilder, Rowena traveled to Caer Palisades with her father, Sir Evern of the Mountain Dream. There, in the presence of Queen Mab, Sir Evern knighted his daughter. Dame Rowena swore fealty to her father and pledged her loyalty to the Kingdom of Apples.

Life in rural Vermont gave Rowena little opportunity to mix with other noble fae. On the few opportunities when she did encounter other sidhe, she discovered that, with few exceptions, the other houses considered the sidhe of House Scathach as barely qualified to call themselves nobles. Her free association with her mortal kindred whispered criticism from many fae, who considered such an action a near violation of the Escheat. Rowena's father took the gossip of other nobles in stride and encouraged his daughter to do likewise. "They don't understand us and they never will" summed up his attitude toward the other houses.

When the disappearance of the High King and the inevitable dissolution of the Parliament of Dreams caused a general breakdown in fae society and a fracturing of once-solid political impulses into numerous warring factions, Rowena and her father attempted to stay apart from the building conflict. Reasoning that saner minds needed to remain uncommitted to any side, father and daughter called together a number of knights—many of them fellow members of House Scathach—and created the Riders of the Midnight Trods as an independent messenger service to ensure communication among the fae of Concordia.

Rowena has grown skilled in both Dream Craft and Wayfare, Arts that assist her in her rounds for the Riders. She excels in equestrian skills and has also learned how to ably defend herself in both armed and unarmed combat. Her training in etiquette, while not flawless, still allows her to comport herself well in courtly situations, though she prefers to avoid formal occasions whenever possible.

Image: This sidhe female wears knightly battle attire, including a surcoat bearing the black unicorn on a stiver background that marks her as a knight of House Scathach. Rowena wears her fair hair in long braids, in the style favored by medieval Saxon women. Her slender build belies the coiled strength of the trained warrior. She is as graceful and deadly on foot as on horseback, and she rides as if her mount were an extension of herself. Rowena's pale, icy blue eyes and stern expression give her a formidable presence. Although her nose is a little too long and her features too strong for conventional beauty, this warrior maiden presents a handsome and aristocratic appearance.

Roleplaying Hints: You prefer riding the trods, carrying important messages to the far corners of the realm to biding time in boring courts or taking sides. Your sympathies lie for the most part with the commoners—like them, you see the intransigence and arrogance of the "full" noble houses all too often for your liking. Speak bluntly and do not waste words, but avoid sounding rude or impatient. Your mortal heritage stems from the hardy folk of New England. Your outer surface is as harsh as granite, but there is a depth and sweetness to your inner core that belies your gruff demeanor.

Story Connection: Rowena may have the distinction of being the first person in Concordia to encounter Danwyn ap Gwydion when he first entered the mortal world. Storytellers may wish to make use of Rowena as a means of introducing characters to any subplots revolving around this mysterious candidate for Concordia's throne. Rowena herself presents a solid connection with the Riders, whom she leads, and with the forces of neutrality in the Kingdom of Apples. Fae seeking safe havens may find some assistance from Rowena and her Riders provided they do not overuse her hospitality or expect her to support their cause.

Vardayne ap Ailil, Bard of the Winter Court

Avery Granger grew up in San Francisco, the son of wealth and privilege. The only child of classical musicians, Avery developed a keen ear for music, but rather than turning his precocious talents to the composers so



loved by his parents, he gravitated instead toward the complex rhythms of world beat and traditional folk music. His Chrysalis came shortly after his thirteenth birthday, when he attended a festival of world music in Golden Gate Park. Discovering his true self, Avery also realized that he belonged to a house known for its intrigue and political acumen, not for its musical expertise. Drifting further apart from *his* family until he spent only his nights at home, Vardayne ap Ailil began the process of separating his fae life as a noble from his mortal existence as Avery Granger. He achieved his intention of shedding his former family ties at the age of sixteen, when he won a competitive scholarship to a small but

prestigious performing arts institution north of San Francisco. Over his parents' objections, Avery/Vardayne moved out of the family home and declared himself independent.

In true Unseelie style, Avery shrugged his shoulders at expectations and decided to pursue his own course of action regardless of the consequences. Fortunately for him, Count Vagon, the reigning dignitary of House Ailil in the Kingdom of Pacifica, recognized the Ailil spirit of ruthless dedication and did not attempt to force Vardayne into any particular mold. Instead, he watched the young musician's progress from a distance and, when the time seemed appropriate, offered the young Ailil a position as his personal bard.

While he continued his musical studies and expanded his repertoire, Vardayne also developed an affinity for politics inspired by his close association with his patron. Accompanying Count Vagon to the Parliament of Dreams, Vardayne soon discovered that he enjoyed the intricacies of the political dance, finding in it the same rich complexity he so relished in music. Before long, he admitted to himself that he looked forward to his trips to Tara-Nar in the retinue of his patron as much as he eagerly approached any other "performance."

During one such trip, Vardayne made the acquaintance of Charity, an exotic sluagh who served as an information broker. Since his duties for Count Vagon included acquiring and assessing rumors, gossip and other bits and pieces of fact and fiction, Vardayne found himself more and more often in Charity's company—and, eventually, in her bed. Although he initially saw his liaison with the sluagh as a business arrangement, Vardayne succumbed to her aloof sexuality and jaded innocence and fell in love. To his surprise, Charity seemed to reciprocate. The pair of lovers feasted on the atmosphere of political intensity that surrounded fae politics. Vardayne received permission from Count Vagon to move from Pacifica to the Kingdom of Apples, where he established a small freehold, ostensibly to remain near to the heart of Kithain politics in his patron's absence. In reality, Vardayne wanted to spend more time with his sluagh lover.

The disappearance of David Ardry and the fall of the Parliament of Dreams brought Vardayne and Charity to an impasse as love and politics declared war on each other, and love came out a poor second. Caught up in the mystifying machinations of the war for the throne of Concordia, Vardayne ignored the problem developing among the commoners until he realized that Charity had taken a stand on the other side of a swiftly widening rift. As political distress exploded into full-scale war between the commoners and the nobles, Vardayne realized that any attempts to remain in touch with Charity would have to take place under close secrecy and that discovery of their relationship would jeopardize both of them. So far, he has considered his love worth the risk.

Vardayne makes the most of his social skills, all of which are highly developed. He is not only an excellent performer, playing many instruments but preferring stringed ones such as the harp and the lute, he also has a knack for public speaking and has become a competent actor (a necessity for anyone involved in politics). His mastery of the fae Arts includes both the noble Art of Sovereign and the Unseelie Art of Contempt in addition to basic abilities in Soothsay and Wayfare.

Image: Vardayne's pale, flaxen hair and dark brown eyes form a study in contrast and add to his unquestionable allure to fae of both sexes. His attractiveness and natural charisma usually ensure that he makes a favorable first impression. Vardayne prefers to dress in the finest voile, favoring rich, dark colors. He has a weakness for fine jewels and usually wears several rings and ear studs. Never seen without his small, exquisitely crafted, hand-held harp, Vardayne ranks as one of the finest bards in Concordia. As a performer without peers, he exudes confidence and sensuality without seeming either effeminate or feral. Though he never denies either his house membership or his Unseelie nature, few who meet him seem to take issue with either, so long as he allows them to bask in his radiant presence.

Roleplaying Hints: The war has separated you from your lover but has opened up a whole new range of political opportunities. While your patron believes you are firmly in his camp—and you do support Count Vagon

and the Ailil High Lord Erdath in their bid to bring the Unseelie to power in Concordia—you also see the plight of the commoner kith. You have Charity to thank for that. Keep your thoughts to yourself, except when legitimately asked to make an assessment of a situation. Bring the same dedication to politics that you do to your music and, above all, practice, practice, practice at both.

Story Connection: Vardayne has witnessed the long, slow death of the Parliament of Dreams and has kept a good record of the developments in fae society since that time. He can serve as a good source of information, as a contact among the Unseelie fae (and thus to the Shadow Court) and as an antagonist who possesses a high degree of personal integrity as well as a very significant weakness, his commoner lover.

Sir Ranulf Dorsey ap Dougal, Knight of the Red Branch

Until his last year in high school, Lowell Gordon lived a normal, if somewhat hectic, life. As the star quarterback for his football team, he spent most of his time outside classes on the playing field or else working out in the gym. He dated casually but had no serious thoughts about long-lasting relationships. His future included a football scholarship to the state university, then a few years of professional football and, finally, a lucrative retirement with endorsements and, maybe, a wife and kids.

All that changed when he zigged instead of zagged across a busy street the evening before his graduation. He woke up in the hospital's intensive care unit, paralyzed from the waist down and missing his left foot, with an eerie feeling in his head, as if some stranger had come to occupy his mind. That night, as Lowell Gordon slipped into a coma from which he would never return, Sir Ranulf Dorsey ap Dougal claimed the body of the comatose teenager and decided that life in a wheelchair was unacceptable. The Glamour induced by this Chrysalis in extremis drew a troll orderly and a Liam head nurse to his side. The pair nursed the newly arrived sidhe in addition to caring for his mortal shell. They helped him recall enough of his host's memories to put together a convincing semblance of Lowell Gordon.

For the next three years, "Lowell" occupied a hell of physical and mental agony as he struggled to overcome his paralysis. Finally, with the help of a prosthetic foot, Lowell took his first steps without assistance. His family was overjoyed at having their son back, even though his dreams of a career in pro football died in the hospital. They made no objection when Lowell asked them to send him to MIT, though they did not hide their surprise at their son's sudden desire to get a degree in engineering.

Three years older than the rest of his classmates, Lowell held himself apart from the usual college extracurricular activities. Instead, he sought and found a group of Kithain in Cambridge who introduced him to the local changeling community, including a physics professor at MIT who, like Lowell, belonged to House Dougal.

Professor London, otherwise known as Sir Louvien, took Lowell—now Ranulf ap Dougal—under his wing, making him his squire and, later, when he had proven himself, recommending him as a candidate for knighthood. That very year, the High King passed through Boston and noticed Ranulf at a reception given in his honor. David Ardry knighted the young man on the spot, claiming that the Dreaming had urged him to do so and that Sir Ranulf had an important role to play in the future of Concordia.

A year later, after a period of secret testing, Sir Ranulf received an invitation to join the Knights of the Red Branch. Two years later, David Ardry disappeared. Sir Ranulf not only mourned the loss of his liege, but he deplored the subsequent collapse of the unity of the Red Branch. Remembering the words of the High King, Sir Ranulf decided that his role in Concordia's future consisted of nothing less than reuniting the Red Branch and placing that elite group at the helm of Concordia's sinking ship.

Image: Built like a quarterback, with strong muscles, a lithe body and powerful arms, Sir Ranulf's curly brown hair and dark blue eyes make him a head turner. His noticeable limp slows him down on foot but does not affect his ability to ride a horse (or a motorcycle) or drive a car. In his fae form, Sir Ranulf stands several inches shorter than most sidhe and has a bulkier build (though still slender by human standards). His hair falls past his

shoulders, and his eyes deepen to blue-black. He prefers serviceable, casual clothes as a mortal, suitable for his position as a consultant to a Boston group of architectural engineers. As Sir Ranulf, he wears elegantly crafted armor that displays his house's blazon entwined with a red vine, symbolic of his membership in the Red Branch.

Roleplaying Hints: You believe that the High King himself, in a moment of prescience, chose you for the task to which you have dedicated yourself. The Red Branch has come to mean everything to you. It symbolizes honor, bravery, determination and camaraderie. You can't let that ideal die. If you can save Concordia by staging a fae version of a military coup, you will do so in a heartbeat. Speak forcefully, whether you are talking to an individual or a crowd. You have a mission to accomplish and, by the Dreaming, you will succeed!

Story Connection: You can provide the characters with a connection to the Red Branch (or what's left of it). You may also want to enlist any nobles in your cause, particularly if they are themselves members of the Red Branch. You can be a staunch ally or an implacable and merciless foe.

Idrisia, Hero of Coldfort

Isabel Blanding's early childhood consisted of daily scoldings from her parents, who deplored their overly large, overly sluggish, seemingly dull daughter's lack of drive, ambition or intelligence. From the time she took her first steps, Izzie constantly struggled to make her way in the world—almost as if she occupied more space than her physical body could account for. Slow to speak, slow to develop, apparently slow to think, Izzie nevertheless demonstrated a fierceness of temper combined with a stubbornness of will that made her, at best, a difficult child.

At first, her parents attempted to handle their problem child on their own using a variety of techniques. Physical discipline such as spanking had no effect whatsoever on Izzie. She simply shrugged off pain as if she didn't even feel it. Locking her in her room had no effect—Izzie battered the lock off her bedroom door so many times that her father finally gave up and removed the door entirely. The only punishment that seemed to have any effect consisted of verbal admonishments



intended to shame the child into obedience or compliance. Appeals to Izzie's pride in herself, strangely enough, succeeded in allowing the Blandings to exert some control over their child.

By the time Isabel was ready for kindergarten, her parents realized that she could not attend a school with "normal" children. Their daughter was just too big, too clumsy and too "plumb dumb" to ever get along on her own, and her lumbering antics might actually injure smaller children. At their wits' end, the Blandings searched for an institution in which to place their child and found one at Coldfort Special Needs Academy just outside New Haven, Connecticut.

The headmistress of Coldfort, Miss Agatha Deveraux, assured the Blandings that they need not worry about their daughter. Isabel would find a haven from the harsh outside world within the confines of Coldfort's campus. Moreover, Deveraux insisted that the residents of Coldfort often found their true identities among others of their kind, people set apart from the world by their special "gifts." The Blandings bid a tearful, though relieved, farewell to their daughter, content that they had done their best by Izzie and that they need trouble themselves about her no longer.

Strangely enough, they were right.

Isabel felt utterly at home in Coldfort for the first time in her short life. Miss Deveraux assigned her a small attic room furnished with an oversized bed and told Isabel that she should consider herself a part of the family. That night, feeling safe and unexpectedly happy, Isabel entered her Chrysalis. The flow of Glamour coming from her room attracted the academy's other residents, who, led by Agatha Deveraux, otherwise known as Baroness Agriana ni Fiona, welcomed the troll childling Idrisia into the freehold of Coldfort. Idrisia had just turned eight.

For a year and a day, Idrisia lived the life she had always dreamed of. No longer scolded for her clumsiness, she reveled in her newfound awareness of her troll-sized body. The enchanted nature of the freehold enabled her to forget about her human form, and the childling discovered a natural, lethargic gracefulness and a powerful strength in her chunky shape. Baroness Agriana furthermore realized that Idrisia possessed a meticulously ordered mind. Far from being stupid, the troll childling demonstrated a remarkable, though methodically slow, intelligence. Idrisia developed a strong sense of loyalty to the baroness, whom she saw as the mother she should have had. Before her ninth birthday, Idrisia swore an oath of fealty to the baroness, binding herself to the protection of Coldfort and its ruler. Ignorant of politics or the growing unease brought about by the disappearance of the High King, Idrisia practiced her combat skills with the single-minded focus of most children at play.

When Coldfort became the target for an attack by Andros and his revolutionary troops, Idrisia gave no thought for her own safety. Though terrified at the sight of her fallen comrade, the childling rushed headlong into battle, striking with all her nine-year-old fierceness at whoever came toward her. Though she turned the tide of the battle and saved the lives of the residents of Coldfort, Idrisia nearly lost an eye and most definitely lost her innocence. Never again would her world be a safe place of combat games and loving, supportive friends. Now she was a soldier, and her home had become the front line of an ugly civil war.

Though she is not clumsy, Idrisia's primary physical characteristics are her kith-related strength and her incredible endurance. She conducts herself with poise and aplomb and shows the potential to be a natural leader, if she lives long enough. Her combat skills are highly developed for a childling. She can also ride, swim and climb with ease.

Image: At nine years of age, this troll female childling is still young enough to wear her waist-length, reddish brown hair in a ponytail. Her face shows the strength she will grow into as a woman while retaining its childish softness. Idrisia's right eye now bears a short scar along its outer edge, evidence of the battle of Coldfort that nearly cost her her young life. She wears a tooled leather breastplate over less military court clothing and carries a battle-axe sized for her still small stature. Idrisia's small fangs give her face a fierce, determined look in keeping with the sobering fact that this childling is, unfortunately, growing up all too fast.

Roleplaying Hints: Speak slowly and think of what you are going to say before you say it. You do not have a quick mind, but you have a sure and truthful one. You owe everything to the baroness, who took you from your bad parents and gave you a home where you could be a troll instead of a "big dumb girl." You would die for her if you had to, and you almost had to when the bad people attacked your home. Now your friends tell you that you are a hero, but you tell them you are a warrior. Heroes wear funny capes and fly. You wear armor and kill.

Story Connection: This troll childling has become a symbol for commoners loyal to the High King and the idea of Concordia. As such, the enemies of noble rule have targeted her for abduction, Banalization or assassination. The characters may encounter Idrisia as an enemy, a friend or as the object of a search and destroy mission.

Charity, the Invisible Patriot

Born to a high-powered New York City ad executive and his socialite wife, Charisse Dunbar spent a childhood of quiet agony, suffering not only the neglect of parents who didn't want her but also the active abuse by a string of governesses and tutors who acted as surrogate parents and full-time tormentors. Forbidden to speak in her parents' presence unless first spoken to or to call attention to herself in any way, Charisse soon learned to make herself as inconspicuous as possible. Silent and brooding, the child developed a rich inner life and concentrated on listening rather than speaking, thinking rather than doing and hiding rather than seeking.

When Charisse was twelve, a new figure came into her life, one who taught her the meaning of terror but also opened her up to her inner self. When the shy, reclusive child failed to bring home grades that satisfied her parents, the Dunbars removed her from private school and hired a tutor. Thaddeus Berns assured Charisse's parents that he could turn their daughter into a singular student, and, in fact, the child's grades improved over the next two years. What the Dunbars failed to notice, however, were the bruises and burns that marked Charisse's body—punishments for academic sloppiness.

Charisse's life, which had resembled a stint in Purgatory, became a term in Hell. Thaddeus excelled in techniques of persuasion that could fall only under the category of torture. Out of desperation, Charisse discovered something about her body that she had not previously known. She could contort her extremely limber body into all sorts of configurations and could, therefore, escape some of the more painful forms of "creative restraints" that Thaddeus used to encourage her to concentrate on her lessons. When Thaddeus began demanding sexual favors from Charisse, she experienced a new form of pain and set her mind to escape.



The day before her sixteenth birthday, Charisse ran away from home. Two days later, on a bus headed for Atlantic City, she felt lightheaded and sick. An elderly woman, a fellow passenger, convinced the driver to make an unscheduled stop along the New Jersey coast. There, within sight of the ocean, Charisse entered her Chrysalis under the watchful eye of a boggan grump who recognized the early warning signs of the awakening of the girl's faerie spirit. Discovering her nature as one of the soft-spoken sluagh, Charisse tried to put her old life behind her. Renaming herself Charity, she followed her boggan guardian to a freehold near Atlantic City. There, Charity discovered how to put her listening skills to good use. She became an information broker, watching and noticing everything that went on around her and selling her knowledge to the highest bidder. Her other "skills," learned so painfully at the feet of her tutor, also served her well, as Charity soon slithered her way into the beds of nobles and titled commoners, catering to their desires—however bizarre—and coming away from her trysts with juicy tidbits of sellable information.

Eventually, her talents, both in and out of bed, earned her a place in the halls of power, and Charity found herself ensconced in Tara-Nar as a primary source of information for the Advocates of the Parliament of Dreams. At her first meeting with Lord Vardayne, the Ailil bard in Count Vagon's entourage, Charity thought he would serve as just another source of information. Little did she expect genuine affection to enter into the mix, but when she realized that she had fallen in love with a sidhe lord, she decided to make the most of the relationship.

Unfortunately, the vagaries of fae society had other intentions. The High King's disappearance and the chaos that ensued brought Charity to a critical point in her life. Although her heart urged her to remain with her noble lover, her growing realization of the plight of the commoner kith drove her in another direction. Charity found that she knew too many ugly facts about the nobles and how they felt about commoners to ally herself with any of the noble factions. She and Vardayne reluctantly separated, vowing that whenever the Dreaming allowed, they would find each other again.

Charity has excellent stealth and subterfuge abilities. Her upper-class childhood has taught her etiquette and social skills. She has mastered the Arts of Chicanery and Ledgerdemain.

Image: This female sluagh looks even thinner and spookier than most of her kith. She wears castoffs and rags, torn into spidery tatters along her arms and hem, giving her the appearance of a secondhand clothing queen. Her short, black hair, cropped to near crewcut length, seems almost out of place with her overall Halloween chic. Her enormous eyes, dark pools of wide-open pseudo-innocence, seem to take in everything. Around her neck, in stark contrast to the poor clothing, Charity wears an elaborately fashioned necklace. Made of spun silver in the form of an intricate spider web, the necklace cradles a stylized black jade spider in its center.

Roleplaying Hints: You make a business of being invisible, unless you want someone to notice you. When you need to, however, you can exude a high degree of sensuality and personal charm. Although you respect the power of words, your vocabulary consists of looks and body language. Make the most of it.

Story Connection: If anyone knows anything about the state of affairs in Concordia, it's Charity. Use her as an information source to start off a chronicle or as a person to fill in vital information should all else fail. Characters may also find themselves in the position of carrying messages between Charity and Vardayne—and concealing their mission from both nobles and commoners.

Rotgut Redhelm

A product of urban Philadelphia's economic and social woes, Roland Robards grew up on the streets, learning his own form of freedom in the city known as the birthplace of liberty. Left on his own, one of an uncounted army of latchkey kids whose parents worked too many hours for too little money, Roland gravitated toward the inevitable street gang as a means of survival and as a way to make a name for himself.

Inherently a tough, gutsy little kid, Roland—who renamed himself Rotgut after winning a dare by eating a



rat carcass—grew into a wiry, top-heavy teenager. His bulging neck muscles and powerful shoulders served him well in daily brawls, while his spring-wound legs could carry him rapidly away from or toward a fight.

In a normal world, Roland would most likely have ended up as a bullet sheath. Instead, a particularly bloody gang fight sparked his Chrysalis. The rest of the battle passed by in a furious rage of mindless, ravenous carnage. Roland emerged as the sole survivor of the conflict, with numerous bleeding wounds and a full stomach. He also realized that he belonged to the carnivorous race of fae known as redcaps.

Roland's explosive outpouring of Glamour attracted the attention of a small oathcircle of local sidhe, young Unseelie wilders from a number of houses who had banded together in defiance of their elders. Seeing in the fledgling redcap a grand opportunity to harness a killing machine in his service, the group's leader, a hard-faced Eiluned lordling named Gervarian, pronounced a geas upon Roland, forcing him to submit his will to the whims of his new masters. For five months, Roland embarked on a frenzy of murderous assault at the behest of Gervarian and his oathmates. Had he chosen his own victims, Roland might have gloried in the terror he caused. Instead, he grew to dread each day's spectacle as Gervarian systematically worked his way through Philadelphia's commoner population. Although his actions and will no longer belonged to him, Roland's thoughts remained his own, and daily they grew more murderous.

Finally, Roland saw his chance. When ordered to cause the prolonged death of a cantankerous old nocker who had once slighted one of Gervarian's oathmates, Roland dutifully cornered the grump in his workshop-freehold. In exchange for a relatively painless (though still prolonged) death, the nocker agreed to help Roland find a way out of his predicament.

Following his orders, Roland delivered the nocker's mutilated body to Gervarian and his other tormentors. Stepping back from the corpse to allow the sidhe a clear view of his handiwork, Roland pulled a small device—crafted by the nocker as a "going-away present" for those who ordered his death—from his pocket and depressed the remote detonator. The victim informed Roland just before he died, "Pushing a button doesn't violate the wording of your geas. You won't be killing them; I will."

Free at last in the city known for its part in the American Revolution, Roland set about exacting even more vengeance on the nobility. He moved from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, where he founded the Urban Renewal League, a blatantly Unseelie antinoble society dedicated to violent revolution. He acquired a small

arsenal of heavy weapons, stole combat attire from the local Army-Navy store and geared up for a battle he felt was coming. His instincts were good.

When the collapse of the Parliament of Dreams set the stage for open war between nobles and commoners, Roland—now known only by his fae moniker of Rotgut Redhelm—saw the perfect opportunity to move the Urban Renewal League into the front ranks of the war. Refusing to remain in one place long enough to attract the attention of the authorities, Rotgut and his army rely on surprise raids and lightning strikes to get across their message of terror.

Image: Rotgut decks himself out in a bizarre combination of medieval armor worn atop basic army gear, including kevlar vest and military camo. Continuing his century-spanning fashion statement, he carries both a wicked-looking barbed sword and a nocker-crafted weapon reminiscent of an M-16. In his midteens, this battle-hardened redcap wears an expression of barely suppressed rage. Stocky in build, with a muscular body and a powerful stride, Rotgut wears a necklace of finger bones taken from those he has defeated.

Roleplaying Hints: Your early experience at the hands of the "noble" sidhe has taught you a very valuable lesson. Show no mercy to those who have the power to force you to your knees. Strike terror into the hearts of the nobility wherever and whenever possible. Take no prisoners except to subject them to a period of prolonged and intense agony culminating in their excruciating death. Even the "innocent" childlings aren't—they, too, will grow up one day unless you do something about it. You save your loyalty and affection for the members of the Urban Renewal League, who look up to you for leadership. You won't do anything to let them down.

Story Connection: Rotgut has a fairly good grasp of the social disarray in the Kingdom of Apples, primarily because he has contributed to it in significant proportions. Commoner characters may find Rotgut a good source of information or armaments; sidhe characters should avoid Rotgut like the plague. Storytellers may want to use this violence-prone redcap to emphasize the

brutality of fae warfare or to provide the troupe with a tough, uncompromising antagonist.

Fenarius, the Honest Liar

Fergus Shaughnessy grew up in South Boston in a hotbed of Irish-American culture. As the youngest of eight children, the red-haired baby of the family soon learned to manipulate his brothers and sisters to get what he wanted, usually by turning on his considerable charm and regarding them with an impish grin. While the older sons and daughters of the Shaughnessy family dreamed of careers as police officers, priests, teachers, nuns or "professional homemakers," Fergus wanted nothing more than to have a good time—or, barring that, to run away and join the circus.

Although his parents sometimes despaired of their youngest child's tentative hold on reality, they had too much on their minds to pay a lot of attention to the boy. Trusting that he would turn out no worse than any other of their brood, the Shaughnessys treated Fergus to indifference or absent-minded affection. The child thrived.

When Fergus was ten, the circus did come to town, and he played hooky to see the elephants march through the streets of Southie. The sight was too much for the irrepressible child and triggered his Chrysalis, sending him out into the middle of the cordoned-off street where one of the huge, gray giants nearly trampled him. A circus attendant jerked the child out of the way and, recognizing the Glamour radiating from Fergus as the sign of a new changeling's "birth," delivered the child into the hands of the ringmaster, a satyr named Maxim the Astounding.

Once introduced to his true identity as a fox pooka, Fergus never looked back. His ten-year-old mind knew that his parents might miss him, but he also reasoned that they had a bunch of other children and didn't really need him underfoot. His fox form came in handy as a means of concealing his presence from the authorities who launched a half-hearted search for the missing child of a lower-income South Boston factory worker. When the circus left town a week later, Fergus, now known as Fenarius, left with it. More than a third of the circus employees



were changelings or kinain and provided an ideal atmosphere for a young pooka's coming of age.

For the next five years, Fenarius traveled throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic region, known in fae circles as the Kingdom of Apples. Although he did not have any great athletic skills, the fox pooka learned to help with the animals, who seemed to enjoy his company, and gained some competence as a magician's assistant and a sometime clown. He also conned the redcap knife thrower into teaching him how to throw knives. Fenarius's favorite gift, received upon his passage from childling to wilder, consisted of a set of throwing

knives, weighted and balanced specifically for him, and a leather baldric slotted to hold the knives.

When news of the High King's disappearance reached the circus, the changeling contingent thought little of the event. They had spent their lives so far from changeling politics that they believed themselves immune to political repercussions. They were wrong. First, they found themselves objects of suspicion whenever they crossed into a new duchy or county. The changeling members of the circus received visits from local reeves demanding tributes of dross necessary for them to perform in the vicinity of a freehold.

Eventually, restrictions on travel drove the changelings from the circus, since they could not pass openly from one noble's territory into another without the proper credentials. Faced with potential disaster, the circus considered disbanding or setting up permanent headquarters in rural New England. Fenarius, unwilling to settle down but realizing that his life with the circus and his youthful idyll had come to an end, decided to take charge of his own future. Returning to Boston, he got in touch with local commoner changelings and founded the Commoners' Liberation Organization. Dedicated to advancing the commoner cause and "having a good time in the process," the CLO orchestrated protests against the nobility in the form of street theatre, impromptu poetry slams, old-fashioned sit-ins, walkathons for freedom and, finally, the now infamous Boston Harbor Revels.

Fenarius has developed a wide repertoire of useful skills and talents, including but not limited to stealth, subterfuge and performance. He has mastered the art of knife throwing and can escape most bonds with ease. His affinity for animals stands him in good stead when he is faced with pursuit by faerie hounds or borrowing a faerie steed for a desperate escape along a forbidden trod. He has learned the Arts of Chicanery and Ledgerdemain and hopes to improve his mastery of Wayfare and Primal.

Image: This male fox pooka has unruly, bushy, red hair and a feral, foxy grin. Though his is only sixteen years old, Fenarius carries himself with a brash confidence that belies his youth. His hazel eyes display a keen intelligence and an irrepressible sense of humor, Fenarius dresses in a kilt. Across his bare chest he wears a baldric holding with

several throwing knives. His overall appearance conjures up the image of a likeable rogue.

Roleplaying Hints: You have looks, you have charm. What else is there besides a good throwing hand, a steady eye and a streak of deviltry a milewide? Up until recently, you didn't care a fig for changeling politics. The circus was your life and you loved it. Now, the nobles are making things difficult for you and your friends—so you'll just make things even more difficult for the nobles. You'll pit your wits against theirs any day.

After all, who can outfox a fox? You find mere facts boring to the extreme, so you adjust them to suit your audience. Give people what they want to hear and they'll come back for more.

Story Connection: Fenarius can provide characters with connections to various commoner grassroots liberation movements. He also has contacts with many circus and ex-circus folks who might provide shelter for fugitives from the wrath of the nobles. Storytellers can also use Fenarius to get characters into or out of trouble with astounding frequency. After all, he is a pooka, and his idea of the truth might not be readily apparent to the characters unless they are very good at catching him in his particular version of factual dissembling.

Yordana, the Voice of Winter

Rodina Shiras spent most of her life on the rocky coast of Maine. The daughter of a lighthouse keeper in an age that had no need for lighthouses, Rodina learned to love the sea for its own sake and to hear the music of the waves and the mournful, yearning cry of the gulls. A modest student, Rodina elected to attend a community college where she could remain close to her elderly parents and her beloved ocean. Her mother died of a stroke before Rodina completed her course of study; her father followed her mother in death the next year. By the time Rodina was twenty, she had nothing left in her life except the ocean and its music.

Then the visions came. In 1969, as men walked on the moon and the world rediscovered wonder, Rodina felt the first stirrings within her of something she could not explain. She experienced dreams that seemed to come from somewhere outside her. She saw a host of men



and women on steeds of unearthly beauty and power riding through dark, twisted landscapes toward an archway limned in glowing colors. Sounds of battle and screams of pain filled her ears as horrid creatures with slaver jaws and burning eyes assaulted the fair riders. She awoke trembling and fled to her favorite beach for comfort.

There, beneath the stars, alone save for the crashing waves, Rodina entered into her Chrysalis and emerged a satyr and a seer. Several months passed before anyone came to fetch Rodina, and when her mentor, an eshu grump named Ibraim, finally arrived, Rodina refused to leave her home. Thus, Rodina—now Yordana—learned of fae society from a storyteller and a nomad. She also learned from her visions.

Yordana and Ibraim became lovers, and Yordana received an education in the art of love as well. Ibraim introduced Yordana to the nearest noble, Baron Guntherian ap Dougal, who graciously welcomed his newest subject and granted her an ember from his own Balefire to transform her lighthouse into a freehold. Though she welcomed the knowledge that a society of others like her existed, Yordana preferred the company of sand and rock and sea. She and Ibraim returned to the lighthouse and each other.

When Ibraim finally announced that he could no longer remain with her but must answer the call of distant lands, Yordana felt a part of her wither away. She knew, however, that this feeling belonged to the cycle of years that made up a lifetime. Her maidenhood had ended, and it was time to concentrate on other changes within her.

Seven months after Ibraim left, Yordana bore their child, a tiny creature who already carried within her a faerie soul; Yordana had seen her daughter's Chrysalis in a dream.

The local midwives in the small Maine community near Yordana's freehold delivered her child, who grew into a strong, willful creature who loved the ocean as much as her mother. When Siriana turned five, her Chrysalis came upon her, revealing her as an eshu, like her father.

Yordana cherished her years with her daughter, knowing that eventually Siriana would feel the call of her kith and take to the road. Dreams and visions continued to come to her, however, and as the years passed, the images Yordana received grew darker and more ominous. When Siriana's urge to travel manifested itself, Yordana saw that her daughter could serve as a messenger, hearing her prophecies to the rest of the changeling community. Thus, satyr prophet and eshu messenger developed a reputation for wisdom and prescience. In this way, Yordana passed the summer of her life.

As she felt herself slipping from her wilder years into the first intimations of age, Yordana sensed a change in her nature. The well-tempered manners of the summer court no longer drew her as the aches in her bones and the fading of colors from her sight reminded her that her own autumn and winter approached. As if in response to her biorhythmic impulses, a trio of changelings, two sidhe and a fellow satyr, appeared at the gateway of her freehold, asking for hospitality. After receiving permission from Yordana to stay as her guests, the three introduced themselves as members of the Shadow Court and told her that their own visions had brought them to the lighthouse.

Yordana's instincts told her to trust the visitors and, at the end of their stay, she allowed them to induct her into the Shadow Court, affirming her transition from Seelie to Unseelie as well as her entry into her final stage of fae existence, as a greybeard.

As her dreams came more frequently and brought with them warnings of harsh winter, Yordana passed from maid to mother to crone.

When the High King disappeared, Yordana's visions seemed to explode within her, taking her during her waking hours as well as while she slept (or tried to sleep). Her body wasted to nothing; skin and muscle stretched light, taut wires over angular bones. Her eyes burned with urgency. Siriana came to the lighthouse, drawn by her eshu birthright to her mother's side. As the words poured forth from Yordana's lips, Siriana committed them to memory and to parchment.

At last, the words stopped and Yordana had time to reflect on what she had seen and prophesied. Though she does not speak all of her thoughts aloud, Yordana has already begun to mourn the death of the world.

Now fully into her greybeard years, Yordana has complete mastery over the arts of Primal and Soothsay. She has learned some Wayfare from her association with the eshu in her life. Her social skills are adequate, but she doesn't waste time with petty protocols. Despite her aging body, she still moves gracefully. The years have not detracted from her powerful speaking voice.

Image: This crone-like female satyr dresses in a style reminiscent of ancient Greece. Though obviously old, she carries herself with dignity. Her hair is peppered with gray but held in intricate Greek fashion atop her head. She wears a necklace of interlocked design centered by a large, square-cut stone. Yordana's eyes are large and intelligent, though surrounded by crow's feet and laugh lines. Her mouth is generous. She gives the impression of wisdom and maturity combined with a sexuality that defies age.

Roleplaying Hints: You have learned to accept that one day you will forget who you are. Like the world's death in the deepest part of winter, so, too, shall your spirit sleep within your body, awaiting a new quickening in a different shell. Don't waste precious time with falsities or courtesies. Say what you have to say, don't soften the hard edges of your prophecies and, above all, don't betray your visions. Winter is coming. Terrible things haunt your dreams. Those who seek you out for guidance must know the truth or disaster will follow.

Story Connection: Yordana is a Storyteller's dream. She can serve as a story starter or as a midstory information source. Storytellers who enjoy inserting prophecies into their chronicles can have a field day with Yordana. Be creative and use her as liberally as you see fit. She is a nexus for the Dreaming and a great vehicle for pointing an erring troupe in the direction it needs to go.

Niall Peacemaker

Niall only recently became aware of his fae nature after receiving an infusion of Glamour from a satyr child who subsequently died at the hands of a band of commoner-hating sidhe. Though he is, himself, a member of House Gwydion—a fact only lately revealed to him—he has no hard knowledge of what his house affiliation means. Unlike most sidhe, Niall lays claim no title, has no freehold and owns neither weapons nor armor.



Now that he has attuned himself to the fae world, Niall has embarked on a journey of self-knowledge, feeling that the need to regain his identity comprises the first step toward keeping a promise made to a dead childling. Niall has come to realize that the Kingdom of Concordia has degenerated into a war zone. He has dedicated himself to bringing about an end to the senseless conflict that rages all around him. Wandering throughout the Kingdom of Apples, he delivers his message of nonviolence and seeks to bring commoners and nobles together.

Niall has not yet detected the extent of his abilities, but each day brings a new discovery. His command of the Sovereign Art has yet to find its limit, while he has already proven his mastery of Primal. He excels in sword fighting, though he avoids combat whenever possible, seeking peaceful solutions first. He also has leadership and social skills that come to the fore almost unconsciously.

Image: This older sidhe appears somewhat the worse for wear, as his face actually shows age lines and other marks of weariness. Looking as though he is a wild man just returned to civilization, Niall has long, tangled hair of an indeterminate color that might once have been either brown or blond but now is streaked with gray. Unlike most sidhe males, he also has an unkempt beard and moustache. Clearly a grump in his mid-forties, Niall wears tattered finery—the ruins of what were once elaborate court clothes. He carries a plain sword in a battered scabbard. His face, despite its careworn lines, displays an attitude of unmistakable nobility as well as deep compassion. His eyes seem to look far away, as though trying to remember something he forgot long ago. Though Niall has emerged as one of the voices of reason, urging peace and an end to a war that grows increasingly ugly, he does not remember his own past.

Roleplaying Hints: You have the sick feeling that you have neglected something very important and that your negligence is connected to your true identity. Somehow you must discover who you are, for in that lies the key to accomplishing a vital task. Your travels have already taught you small things, reminding you of skills you didn't realize you possessed. You need to find more pieces to the puzzle of your life. In the meantime, you also need to do what you can to divert as many changelings as possible from the course of war to the path of peace. You named yourself "peacemaker" for a reason, and that is the one thing you can't forget.

Story Connection: Niall Peacemaker has a part to play in the future of Concordia, just as he has had a part in its past, though he does not remember it. Storytellers should use him as a figure of inspiration while retaining the mystery of his past.

Danwyn ap Gwydion

Danwyn ap Gwydion's earliest memory has to do with a blinding light, swiftly followed by agonizing pain and a desperate need to clothe himself in something solid. As luck or fate or Dan would have it, Danwyn found a likely host for his newly arrived fae spirit in the form of a young distance runner whose daily exercise run through Boston's Public Garden carried him past at just the right moment. Without a hitch, Danwyn slipped inside the runner's form and sent his host's mortal soul back through the swiftly closing trod.

Sifting through the residual memories of his new body, Danwyn realized that his mortal host, Daniel Faring, had many advantages and only a few disadvantages. As a rising track and field star who just missed the 2000 Olympics, Daniel had cut most of his family ties and now focused on the next meet, the next competition. Moreover, Faring had attained a level of financial independence that meant that he did not need to tie himself down to a job. This suited Danwyn, since traveling throughout his new environment and learning how to survive in both the fae and mortal worlds occupied the top spot on his agenda.

His initial meeting with Rowena ni Scathach, just moments after he had taken possession of his mortal body, gave Danwyn some tantalizing hints about the state of affairs in this place called Concordia.

All he could remember from his previous life in Arcadia was that he had come to this wretched realm to seek his rightful crown—whatever that meant. Rowena's news that Concordia currently lacks a king seemed to beckon to him with a certainty that could come only from the Dreaming itself.

Now Danwyn travels throughout the Kingdom of Apples, visiting freeholds and talking with commoners and nobles alike. Wherever he goes, he acquires followers, as many who listen to him find themselves compelled to swear fealty to the handsome, charismatic young leader who seems chosen by the Dreaming to be the next High King.

Image: In both his human and fae forms, Danwyn stands well over 6 feet and has a slim, muscular build. His runner's body has both strength and endurance in addition to physical grace. Danwyn's voice announces his affiliation with House Gwydion. Though his style of courtly clothing seems ancient even by fae standards, he carries himself with an unconscious air of command that makes others around him seem shabby in comparison. His face exhibits the ideal of the Gwydion knight—strong chin and high, prominent cheekbones frame a generous mouth. His dark brown eyes communicate sincerity and truthfulness. He wears his dark brown, shoulder-length hair tied at the back of the neck.

Roleplaying Hints: The Dreaming brought you here to this hellish place of harsh colors, loud noises and reeking odors for a purpose, and you must find out quickly what that purpose is. You have a natural instinct for leadership, and the people you have encountered seem to have a desperate need for that. You don't remember who you were in Arcadia except for your name, but you have a feeling that your closest kin have preceded you to this terrible land. The thought of discovering their identity fills you with fear as well as anticipation, as though some dire fate will be fulfilled when you discover who you really are.

Story Connection: For now, Danwyn's role in the future of fae society remains shrouded in the Mists. Storytellers should use him as a mysterious figure, an enigmatic and powerful leader who has come out of nowhere to add a new twist to Concordian politics. More on Danwyn's identity will emerge in future supplements.

Old Stories

The story of David Ardry's disappearance and Sir Seif's search for the missing king began in Kingdom of Willows. Since that time, the principle characters have grown and changed, marked by their experiences and thrust into new roles by the collapse of fae society in Concordia. More complete descriptions of many of these characters appear in earlier books, but Storytellers and players may find the information presented here useful in bringing these individuals up to date. Of course, events in your own chronicles may have instituted vastly different changes than the ones detailed below. Don't feel obliged to accept everything as written. As usual, your game is in your hands.

Queen Faerilyth, High Queen in Exile

Since the disappearance of her husband in June 1998, Faerilyth has assumed the title of High Queen of Concordia and has conducted her affairs as if she expects David's imminent return. This situation has gone on for so long, however, that even Faerilyth's faith in David's ability to overcome whatever ills have claimed him wears thin. Once the pampered ward of King Meilge, who groomed the young Eiluned for greatness before sending her to the court of David Ardry, Faerilyth has blossomed into a charismatic and personable leader. Though she lacks the absolute conviction and strong presence of her husband, Faerilyth uses her natural charm and graciousness to win over even the most recalcitrant opponents.

Contrary to the wishes of King Meilge, who hoped that his ward would remain under his protection during her "difficulties," Faerilyth insisted on completing the grand tour of Concordia originally planned by David to introduce the High Queen to her subjects. In the company of chaperones Duke Firedrake and Duchess Igrania, Faerilyth and Sir Lleu Ardwyad, Queen's Champion, traveled to each of the kingdoms of Concordia. While she did not receive the overwhelming acceptance she had hoped—and David's presence would have assured—Faerilyth nevertheless managed to keep alive in the hearts and minds of many of Concordia's changelings the belief that the High King would return. At every freehold

she visited, Faerilyth delivered the same message: So long as she lived, Concordia had a ruler who would keep David's vision alive.

Although she has completed the grand tour, Faerilyth has received warnings not to return to the Kingdom of Apples, where Queen Mab, Lady Morwen and Princess Lenore all have strong supporters who do not hold Faerilyth in the same esteem as they did her husband. Though still reluctant to cast herself upon the kindness of her former guardian, King Meilge, Faerilyth has returned to the Kingdom of Willows, where she now resides (at least temporarily) with Duchess Igrania. Sir Lleu remains her constant protector and closest friend. While many feel their relationship has crossed the boundaries of friendship, no one has, as yet, any proof of impropriety.

Image: Faerilyth's beauty exemplifies the dark attractiveness associated with House Eiluned. Waist-length black hair and dark violet eyes produce an unforgettable first impression on her subjects. As slender as a willow and as graceful as a deer, Faerilyth dresses in deep blues and violets, though lately she has taken to wearing blacks and grays, as if in mourning for her husband. Her eyes have grown even darker with sorrow, and she rarely smiles except when in public.

Roleplaying Hints: You would sacrifice your faerie soul and your connection to the Dreaming itself to have David Ardry back in your life. He has never left your heart, though you feel your connection to him dwindle to a barely perceptible sensation of emptiness that, nevertheless, is better than no sensation at all. The political disorder caused by his absence appalls you, and you regret that you cannot hold together the vision your husband created single handedly a quarter of a century ago.

Still, so long as you can rally David's true supporters to keep alive their hope, you believe that one day the Dreaming will answer the unspoken ache in your heart. Lleu's companionship has proven invaluable, both because he reminds you of David and because he so obviously respects you. You have steeled yourself against the danger of responding to his devotion in an unseemly fashion, but as the days pass with no news of David's return, you wonder if he might, in truth, be irretrievably gone.

School your emotions, your actions and your words with the harshest discipline you can muster. Never believe for a moment that you have the luxury of a "private" moment. All of Concordia watches your every move.

Story Connection: Faerilyth heads one of the major factions in the fight for the throne. Although she does not want to see blood spilled over the succession, she does believe that none of the other contenders has the ability to keep alive David Ardry's vision of Concordia. Characters may become involved with Faerilyth as members of a group that supports her or as members of the opposition. Commoner characters may have mixed feelings about the Eiluned noblewoman, or they may simply write her off as just another of the arrogant *sidhe* oppressors. Faerilyth continues to keep up her contacts with the Cat's Cradle through Duchess Igrania, even though it puts her in an awkward position regarding fellow member Queen Mab.

Sir Lleu Ardwyad, "the Forsworn Knight"

The High King's cousin has served David Ardry faithfully since his arrival in Tara-Nar from the Kingdom of Grass. A member of the Red Branch, Lleu dedicated himself to the protection of the High King, receiving the privileged and well-deserved title of King's Champion. Sharp-eyed courtiers of Tara-Nar, however, noted the looks and glances that passed between Lleu and Faerilyth since their meeting at David's court. Gossip and rumor led to speculation that the High Queen and the King's Champion had gone beyond the boundaries of courtly love into the uncharted country of infidelity.

While no facts give substance to the rumor, the beliefs of others weigh heavily on Gwydion's "perfect knight." Lleu does, in fact, love Faerilyth and, had David not claimed her heart, he certainly would have sought permission from her guardian, King Meilge, to court her.

Lleu blames himself for the High King's disappearance, firmly believing that if he had watched his cousin more closely and had not allowed his emotions for Faerilyth to distract him, disaster would not have befallen David. He feels that the Dreaming punished him for his failure by placing Caliburn into the hands of a

mere storyteller, whose recent elevation to knighthood does not erase his commoner birth. Designated as Queen's Champion, Lleu had the agonizingly sweet task of protecting his cousin's wife (and his own unrequited love) as Faerilyth completed the grand tour of Concordia.

Now ensconced with Faerilyth in the Deep South under the protection of Duchess Igrania and Duke Firedrake, Lleu finds himself drawn even deeper into his moral quandary.

Image: Touted by many as the "perfect" knight, Lleu stands tall and proud, with dark brown hair, green eyes and a trim yet muscular build. He dresses in fine clothing, usually with some mark of his house prominently displayed, yet never appears overdressed or inappropriately attired. He moves with the gracefulness of a trained fighter, each action studied and economical, with no wasted motion.

Roleplaying Hints: Anyone who wants to get to Faerilyth, for any reason whatsoever, has to go through Lleu Ardwyad first. Protective to a fault, arrogant and rude as only a Gwydion lord can be while still retaining the high standards of courtesy and chivalry of a knight without peer, you treat everyone around you with extreme propriety and a good dose of suspicion. After all, your cousin the High King disappeared from the midst of a group of loyal subjects.

Every day you wish fervently for the reappearance of David Ardry; every evening, you admit your relief that another day has passed without your wish's fulfillment. Your life has become a continual struggle between heart and head, love and duty, honor and passion. Faerilyth confides in you, sharing with you in private her heartaches and the unspoken torment she endures as she waits in vain for word that her lord has returned. If anything, your devotion to her has grown stronger and purer, even as her own love for her husband has deepened in his absence.

You keep track of the swiftly deteriorating politics of Concordia, and you know that it is only a matter of time before the war already raging in the Kingdom of Apples spreads to the more remote regions of the realm. Here in the southernmost part of the Kingdom of Willows, you have received a reprieve from the strife, but the storm clouds already crest the horizon. You have made secret

preparations to flee across the ocean with Faerilyth, if necessary, to keep her out of the hands of those who might harm her—and that group seems, on some days, to encompass most of Concordia's nobility.

Story Connection: Sir Lleu serves as Faerilyth's champion and strongest supporter. Characters who wish to devote themselves to the High Queen's cause must first gain the approval of Sir Lleu to gain an audience with Faerilyth. Storytellers can use Lleu to kick off their chronicles, since he seeks information about the progress of the other contenders for the throne—knowledge that he cannot acquire himself without leaving Faerilyth's side.

Sir Seif, Swordbearer

Since Caliburn chose this young eshu storyteller as its chosen "bearer" and as the one meant to undertake the quest to find the High King, Sir Seif has undergone a change of mammoth proportions. As a storyteller attached to King Meilge's court, Seif learned to subordinate himself to the stories he told. Modest and self-effacing, Seif rarely called attention to himself, content to let his stories take center stage. Now that he has embarked on the greatest quest in the history of Concordia, Seif finds himself a central character in a story for the ages.

Seif's quest has taken him far from the Kingdom of Willows. In the two years since David Ardry's disappearance, he has made his own "grand tour" of Concordia. Despite his efforts, however, the object of his search eludes him. Knowing that his kith's birthright should enable him to succeed eventually in locating the High King, Seif can only believe that the Dreaming has some reason for insisting on such a circuitous route to his goal.

As war breaks out in Concordia, drawing lines in the sand between commoners and nobles, Seelie and Unseelie, monarchists and anarchists, Seif comes to the realization that his quest has a greater purpose. As Seif carries Caliburn throughout the kingdoms of Concordia, both he and the sword symbolize the power of the Dreaming.

The eshu storyteller has matured, growing into an accomplished traveler and a courageous swordbearer. Wherever he goes, he tells the story of the king who worked for justice and fairness. In every freehold where he has taken shelter, Seif's stories have strengthened the Balefire and given hope to changelings of all kith.

Recently, however, Seif has heard the call of distant realms and has come to the realization that his search may take him away from Concordia. He believes that this urge to travel beyond Concordia's borders means that either David Ardry has left Concordia or that something necessary to his quest lies elsewhere in the world.

Image: Compact in build, Seif appears younger than his actual years. His deep brown skin and curly, black hair darken in his fae mien, but his huge eyes remain a consistent feature in both human and fae forms. Seif dresses in armor and clothing that more closely resemble the garb of warriors of Northern Africa than medieval models. He wears Caliburn in a scabbard strapped to his back, refusing to draw the blade which, he maintains, does not belong to him.

Roleplaying Hints: Caliburn chose you two years ago to lead the search for the High King. Since then, you have given up everything in service to the great treasure. You have received much in return, however, since you have grown in wisdom and experience as you have traveled to every corner of Concordia. Lately, you have felt the need to travel across the ocean. Your kith has its origins in the dreams of Africa, and you believe that somewhere in those lands you might find something key to the future of Concordia, the High King and all the fae. What that thing is, you do not know, but you trust in the Dreaming to lead you to your proper destination.

Story Connection: Seif abhors the conflict that has arisen because of David's disappearance, yet he does not feel drawn to take sides. His loyalty lies with Caliburn and, through that treasure, the Dreaming itself. Storytellers may wish to use Seif as a resource in their chronicles or as a means of starting a story—with a storyteller.

Morwen, Sister of Sorrow

David's sister has always supported her brother loyally, fiercely and without questions. Despite their differences in philosophies, she has defended David against all detractors. Although Morwen does not share her brother's fondness for commoners or his unerring sense of fair play, she recognizes that the Dreaming has chosen David to rule; his ideas, therefore, must have the Dreaming's approval.

Her support of David, however, does not extend to his choice of wife. From the moment she set eyes on Faerilyth, Morwen felt a surge of jealousy that she has been unable to withstand. In Arcadia, Morwen and David had been lovers; here, in the mortal realm, they returned as brother and sister, bound to suppress their passion for one another and to content themselves with sibling affection. In truth, Morwen resents having to share David with anyone.

Morwen blames Faerilyth for David's disappearance and has urged the Red Branch knights sworn to David to seek out her brother's wife for questioning. At first, she backed Princess Lenore's claim to the throne as David's heir. Of late, however, Morwen has come to believe that Lenore does not yet have the savvy to rule Concordia. Many nobles, particularly those who feel that David gave too many rights to the commoners, have urged Morwen to declare herself Queen of Concordia, at least until her brother returns. Others insist that Morwen should honor her brother's intentions and rule as Regent until Lenore can demonstrate her fitness to rule.

Recently, Morwen has entertained visits by Duke Dray. Whether she is considering forming an alliance with the ultraconservative noble (and fellow house member) or trying to keep the outspoken duke from leading his own "nobles first" crusade, no one knows for certain. Rumors, however, insist that politics make strange bedfellows.

Image: Morwen exhibits a wild beauty that complements her brother's solid good looks. With her luxurious, honey brown hair and large, hazel eyes, Morwen could attract anyone in Concordia, but she carries herself with an aloofness that belies her fiery inner nature. Her protectiveness toward David and the dream of Concordia shows in her actions and in her coiled movements. Lately, Morwen has taken to attiring herself in battle-ready garments—just in case she needs to defend herself, her honor or what's left of her brother's kingdom.

Roleplaying Hints: Since you and David arrived in the mortal world, you have contented yourself with acting as your brother's second-in-command. You have supported David from the first day of his kingship and you support him now, even though he has vanished into thin air. You don't, however, support the usurper who calls herself High Queen. You would back the Princess Lenore, who David acclaimed years ago as his heir, but you feel that the teenage princess does not yet have the inner strength to take charge of a land so wracked by disturbances. You know that you can rule with a firm hand, dispensing the same justice and fairness that the High King so ably dealt to his subjects without coddling the commoners at the expense of the nobility. You entertain any and all who have advice for you, but you keep your own counsel. If you should prevail as the next ruler of Concordia, you will allow no one—lord or lady—to dictate your course of action. Until the Dreaming makes it clear to you that you should take the throne, however, you steadfastly refuse to declare yourself as more than David's seneschal.

Story Connection: Morwen is a tragic figure in many ways. Cheated of her passion for David by the fickleness of the Dreaming, she has had to keep her feelings for him in check. Now she finds herself in the unenviable position of trying to hold together a land that does not want to remain united while all around her others scramble to prove that they are the most fit to rule. Storytellers can use Morwen as a background figure in their chronicles or as a patron of the characters.

Princess Lenore, the Abandoned Heir

Since her appointment as David's heir, Princess Lenore has come to symbolize not only the hopes and dreams of House Dougal but also the close relationship between her house and House Gwydion. Lenore has recently passed her Torgail Ainn celebration and officially entered her wilder years. To many, this change marks her "majority" and means that she has earned the right to rule without a regent to act in her stead.

Lenore, herself, has mixed feelings about her role in Concordian politics. The orderly, sheltered life she has led in Tara-Nar, under the watchful eyes of her tutors, has come to a disordered and abrupt end. Her beloved guardian, David Ardry, has disappeared. David's sister Morwen, who Lenore had come to know and respect as a mother, now draws away from her and treats her with coolness and suspicion. Only Queen Mab seems to genuinely want what is best for the young heir to Concordia's throne. Because of the pressures at Tara-Nar and the growing tension between Lenore and Morwen, Queen Mab intervened on Lenore's behalf and offered her a home with her in Caer Palisades.

Lenore now finds herself in another double bind. Many courtiers from Tara-Nar followed Lenore to her new home-away-from-home, hoping to gain the good graces of the "next High Queen." These supporters of Lenore, many of them knights thought to belong to the Red Branch, form a protective contingent around the Dougal princess.

Queen Mab, however, also has a group of nobles who believe that she should rule Concordia or act as Regent for Lenore. Quarrels between the rival factions have grown more frequent, and Lenore often finds herself forced to assert her authority to avert open hostilities.

She has almost reached a decision to leave Queen Mab's protection and strike out on her own.

Image: Definitely a wilder, Lenore exhibits a strange, pale beauty that takes familiarity to appreciate fully. Her Dougal flaw exhibits itself in her lack of hearing in one ear. She has learned to compensate for her partial deafness through lip reading, although she has also developed the habit of cocking her head so as to place her good ear toward anyone who speaks to her for any length of time. Of late, since her emergence as a contender for the throne, Lenore has taken to focusing more attention on her appearance, prompted, no doubt, by her guardian in David's absence, Queen Mab.

Roleplaying Hints: You knew that one day you would inherit the throne of Concordia. You have prepared all your life—or at least since David Ardry named you his heir—for the time when you would rule. You did not expect that time to come so soon.

You miss David. You were beginning to get to know his wife Faerilyth, but you can't exactly say that you miss her; you didn't get the chance to know her well enough to form an attachment to her. You wish that Morwen didn't turn away from you. Most of all, you want the old days to return and the fighting to stop. Queen Mab has taken you away from your home to keep you safe from harm, but you don't think that you can be safe anywhere so long as there are so many rivals to the throne. You need to do something soon, but you don't know what that something is. Sometimes it all seems so hopelessly muddled you just feel like riding the carousel in Caer Palisades around and around, waiting for the golden ring to appear. You hope the Dreaming will send you some sign that will give you a clue as to what your next move should be.

Story Connection: If Lenore decides to leave the protection of Queen Mab, she will need a group of protectors, particularly if she leaves without the knowledge of the knights sworn to her service. The characters might find themselves drafted into the role of Lenore's companions. On the other hand, they might be quested by a frantic Queen Mab to find the runaway heir. If Lenore chooses to remain with Queen Mab, she will still need friends and guardians, since she represents a threat to the other factions.

Queen Mab, Ruler of the Kingdom of Apples

Queen Mab was one of the first to acknowledge David Ardry as High King and swear fealty to him. Since David's creation of Concordia, Mab has supported his cause to the best of her ability, ceding to him the lands where David built Tara-Nar and providing him with her wise counsel. Her Fiona passion has tempered with age, but she still evokes a tremendous amount of emotion when she latches onto a cause.

Most of the fae do not realize how much David Ardry owes to Queen Mab. She has long espoused many of the same ideas that the High King used as the basis for his dream of Concordia. Her enlightened rulership and visionary leadership has made her beloved by commoners as well as nobles. She inspires trust in all her subjects—Seelie and Unseelie alike.

As a member of the Cat's Cradle, Mab has made contacts with Seelie and Unseelie noblewomen throughout Concordia. Her firm conviction that only an alliance of all the fae can forestall the worst ravages of the coining Winter lends power to her actions.

After the disappearance of the High King, Mab made an astute assessment of the political situation and realized that the Princess Lenore occupied the most vulnerable position of those close to the High King. Fearing that Morwen might resent handing over the rulership of Concordia to a mere girlchild, Mab approached Lenore with the intention of offering her an alternative to remaining in Tara-Nar. Princess Lenore accepted Mab's offer, impressing the Queen of Apples with her mature grasp of her own situation.

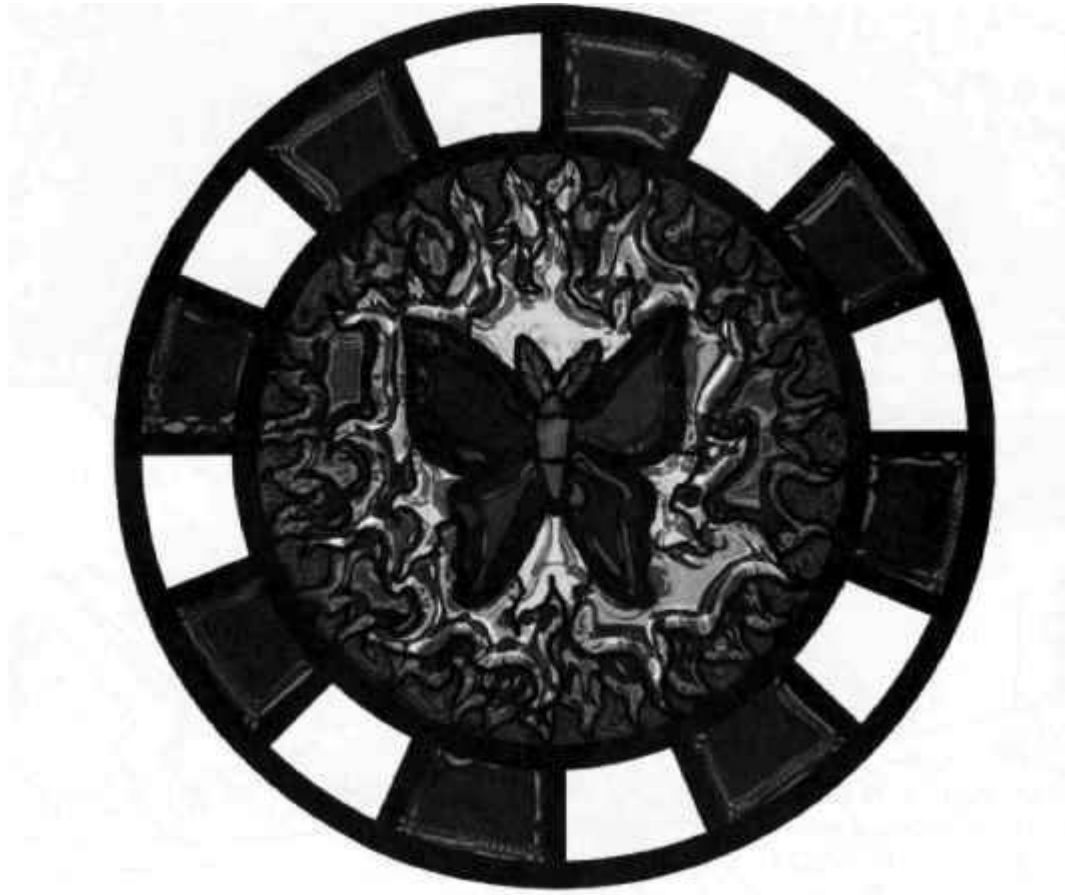
Unfortunately, some of Mab's own supporters have urged her to press her own candidacy for the throne, arguing that Mab's experience and age make her the best

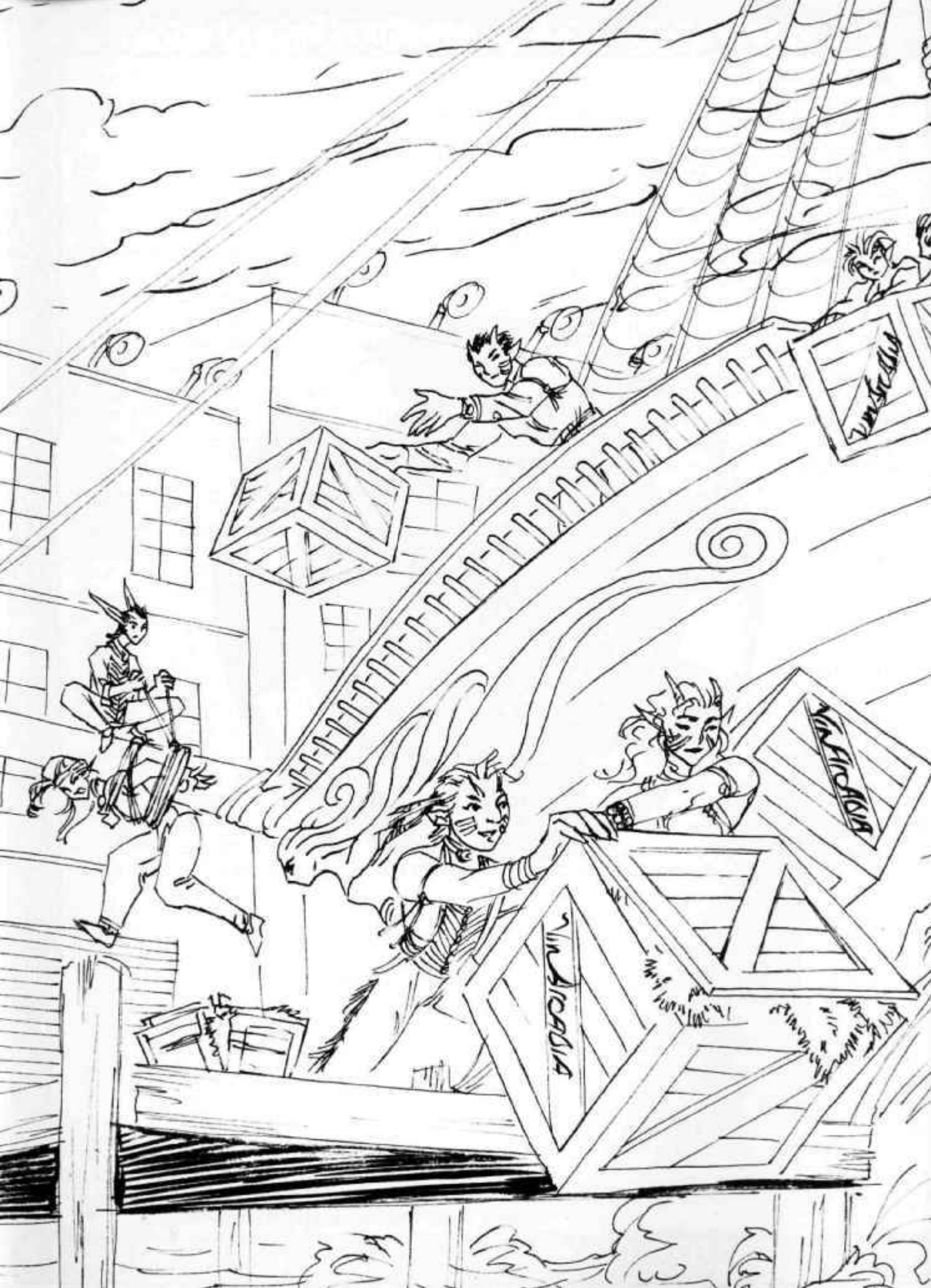
of all possible rulers. The outbreak of war has changed Mab's outlook. She now wonders whether those who urge her to take Concordia in hand might not be right.

Image: Queen Mab represents the quintessential "grand dame" of the fae world. She has an ageless beauty that could never be mistaken for youth. Though her face bears faint lines of age, her deep blue eyes gleam with wisdom and humor. When not attired in court finery, Mab dresses simply, as befits a woman of her age and character. She moves with grace and dignity and never appears out of place—ever.

Roleplaying Hints: The thought that Concordia could not outlive David Ardry saddens you. You have spent the last three decades striving for excellence as a ruler and conducting your affairs so as to encourage the best qualities of all your subjects. Now you see all you worked for crumbling under the weight of civil war and outright revolution. You must do something, since no one else seems of a mind to take decisive action. You would love to place Lenore on the throne, but you fear that she might not be able to do the job. If only David Ardry had waited another few years before disappearing. Perhaps you should attempt to claim the throne and take charge for a few years, abdicating in favor of Lenore when she has developed more political acumen. Whatever you decide, however, you must act soon or all will be lost.

Story Connection: Queen Mab may well be the pivotal figure in the rivalry for the throne of Concordia. As Queen of Apples, she has the fealty of all the nobles in her realm and can command them, provided they have not openly broken faith with her. She currently shelters Princess Lenore and, therefore, has the heir to the throne of Concordia within her sphere of influence. As a member of the Cat's Cradle, she has an even larger agenda. All of these facts provide Storytellers with many ways to work Mab into their chronicle.





CHAPTER FOUR: BATTLEFIELD DREAMS

*Two soldiers fighting in a trench
One soldier glances up to see the sun
And dreams of games he played when he was young
And then his friend calls out his name
It stops his dream and as he turns his head
A second later he is dead.
—The Kinks, *Some Mother's Son**

Warfare in the War of Dreams

You can't have a war without some combat. Hence our section on the finer (?) art of battle among changelings. We start with the big picture to get a sense of the scale involved.

Mass Combat: The Big Picture

Unless you play in a "high incidence" setting, one where changelings and other supernatural creatures are literally crawling out of the woodwork, your mass battles are unlikely to involve more than twenty to fifty people. With that in mind, both the Storyteller and the players can probably visualize scenes fairly easily. Whatever configuration the battle takes—a mass melee in midfield, a frontal assault on a castle, the clash of airborne fighting

ships or the long-range artillery fire from nocker-constructed war tanks—there aren't so many units involved that the characters (and their players) lose track of where friendly troops are. In this case, it's a fairly straightforward matter for Storytellers to portray the overall picture and the characters' place in it. When there are only thirty people fighting and five of them are the characters, they have a major impact on the outcome of the battle.

It's not so simple when there are a thousand combatants on each side, dozens of war machines, chimerical troops and cantrip effects whizzing all over the battlefield. Nobody can keep track of all that, even with the aid of miniatures and a battle map (though these tools help in depicting a general overview). Furthermore, it takes the Storyteller a lot longer to plan such a battle and find significant things for the characters to do in the combat.

Among so many combatants, the characters' actions are practically insignificant unless they are assigned (or assign themselves) a specific action cleverly designed to win the day.

Just Another Joe

While Storytellers usually want to make the characters the center of the action, using them as "grunts," or normal troops, in a huge melee isn't necessarily a bad thing—once.

Rather than providing the characters with a special role, send them into the thick of the battle. Chances are, since they are player characters, they are stronger, are better equipped and have more magic than any Storyteller character, and thus have a greater chance to survive. Nonetheless, real battle isn't choreographed. It's a confused mess in which every combatant must do his utmost to get the enemy before the enemy gets him. Nobody watches your back, and you don't have the luxury of a polite combat in which everyone stands in his own line and pokes at the other guy. Foes are all around you, and a death blow can come from anywhere, even friendly troops. If you're too slow or too unlucky or just out of place at the wrong time, you end up dead. No second chances. And that's one of the worst parts of this war: Many of the changelings involved aren't handing out chimerical damage; they're going for the kill, and some of them are wielding cold iron. If the Storyteller can lead the players to feel that their characters may really die out there, the drama is certainly heightened, and suddenly this whole war becomes much more real, intense, personal and frightening. If they come out of it with no worse than a good scare and some troubling memories, they're lucky.

Focused Description

Still, the players need some sort of understanding of what's happening around them for the battle to have any meaning for them. That's why doing cinematic scene descriptions interspersed with cut-to scenes is a must. Description is the key word and shouldn't be limited to visual images. Nor should descriptions beat around the bush. War is ugly. Death in war is brutal. Don't let your players glorify it. Tell it straight and be specific. On the other hand, excessive gore is just that—excessive. The following examples may help clarify what we mean by cinematic descriptive scenes.

Example A: You see the signal from your side's general. You're in a big field full of changelings of all

types. Your side runs forward to engage the enemy, and you're in the middle of a huge battle.

Not very interesting! Not very informative, either.

Example B: Dawnbreaks, its rose-yellow light streaming over the land. Looking out from the woods, you can see the alfalfa field where battle will soon be joined. The scent of rotting hay your way on the chill breeze. General Firestorm waves a flag stained red by the blood of his murdered children. It's the signal to advance. Running forward, you see the enemy charging out from its own cover. Battle cries roar out. Already the smell of blood taints the air. Blaring horns compete with the thunder of horses' hooves and the clang of sword and axe. Beside you an eshu goes down, his throat pierced by a long arrow. The fletching quivers as his blood pumps out over the deadly shaft. The tang of his blood mixes with the sick-sweet smell of vomit as another soldier falls, his arm lopped off at the elbow. Gunfire's staccato rhythm serves as a backdrop to the screams of horses and the roar of battle machines. Squirming masses of struggling figures surround you, bumping into you, slashing wildly. Screams fill the air as steel, or iron, meets flesh.

Example B is admittedly longer and takes more time to describe, but its specific imagery evokes a far more gripping scene than example A ever could. It places the character right in the midst of the battle and tells her what she can see, hear, smell and feel. It doesn't give her a good sense of whether her side is winning or losing, nor does it hint about what other units are up to, because she could not experience that from where she is. The description also does not tell her what she thinks about it all (no "you're startled when" or "you feel terrified by" type comments, which understandably annoy players, since they like to decide for themselves how they feel and how their characters react).

Cut-To Scenes

So how do you get the big picture in? Simple. That's where a cut-to scene works. A good cut-to scene establishes something going on that the characters cannot witness and don't usually know. The Storyteller presents the cut-to as a scene that sets mood or heightens enjoyment, explaining that the characters cannot interact with it and that although the *players* know of it, the characters do not. The characters may find out about it later or may even reach a spot where they might interact with it (or with something that happened because of it or someone involved in it). As an illustration, let's look again at example B. At one point in the description, the

Storyteller speaks of blaring horns. Though the characters hear them, they don't know who is sounding the horns, nor do they know why unless it's a prearranged signal for their side. For this purpose, let's say the horns are not a prearranged signal, at least not for the characters' side. So, in the descriptive scene, the characters hear horns. How much more significance would that have if the Storyteller had run the following cut-to scene before the battle sequence?

Cut-to: Galloping from the east, the sun's brilliant rays sparkling on their glittering helms and polished shields, the sidhe knights race toward the battlefield. Faerie steeds toss their manes, moving with grace and precision to form a deadly battle line facing the commoner army. Golden horns are lifted, and a clarion call tings out across the field as the Shining Host lifts needle-sharp lances and, as one, thunders down upon the waiting commoners.

By going back and forth, from cut-to scenes to individual descriptive scenes, the Storyteller can personalize the immediate scene for the characters while also giving the players a sense of the overall view. Though focused on the character, such descriptive scenes are not personal combats. Those focus in even more tightly on the characters' actions (rather than their perceptions).

Mass Combat: Planning and Execution

If either the Storyteller, the players or both enjoy planning strategies or believe they are necessary to really determine how a battle will go, there are several ways to go about it. The easiest method is to simply have the players tell the Storyteller what actions their characters are trying to accomplish, making a few rolls to ascertain success or failure and determine the outcome. If you're a die-hard strategist, however, such a quick resolution—and one so dependent on the luck of the dice—may not satisfy you. While the following isn't a complete and comprehensive guide to all the ways to run a battle, it is intended as a helpful reminder of some of the options when portraying mass combats.

Battle Options

It always helps to pinpoint exactly what sort of battle you're talking about. A wild free-for-all calls forth a mindset quite different from a formal meeting between two opposing armies. Herewith, we look at a few types:

- **Old-fashioned:** Old-fashioned, honorable battles pit one side against the other with fairly standard forma-

tions and rules of engagement. Some armies may even have representatives meet before the actual combat to discuss what rules will apply during the battle. They might, for example, decide that only chimerical damage is acceptable or that mounted troops may engage only other mounted troops. Some might stipulate that knights must fight only other combatants who equal their rank rather than attacking commoners or lesser-armed foes. Arrangements for taking prisoners and ransom and treatment of those captured are usually worked out beforehand. Some of these types of battle even spell out how many losses a side can take before being declared the loser. Highly chivalrous, old-fashioned battles are rare, especially in the War of Dreams. Too many of the combatants feel too strongly about the issues. They want to bash heads and see blood, not win an oh-so-civilized dance of attrition.

- **Strategic Assault:** Whether used to attack a fortified position or to outline a likely plan for a battle in the field, strategic assaults call for the leaders to know several details. What are their troops' strengths? Where will those troops be placed? What terrain features might make a difference in the battle? Will any of their forces be held in reserve or used as surprise attackers? Such decisions are best made when the strategist knows something about the foes the army is facing and what their plans are likely to be. If your troupe likes such detailed planning, it can benefit from the simple mass combat rules outlined below.

The rules actually work best when used with this type of battle plan. Battle mats and miniatures or counters indicating troops strengths also work well with strategy.

One particularly interesting twist on the strategic assault when using battle mats is to layer them. Place a larger, solid mat underneath a transparent one. On the solid mat, mark in the terrain features of the area's Dreaming and a trod entering it. On the transparent mat, mark in the real-world features and the location of the portal for the trod. This allows the troupe to move from Autumn World to Dreaming when planning or executing its strategies. Imagine the foes' surprise when your reserve troops suddenly emerge from the Dreaming to overwhelm them! Imagine fighting desperately against a strong opponent, then suddenly finding you've both stepped into the Dreaming. Without warning, chimerical damage abruptly becomes all too real. And what happens if you accidentally step off the trod?

- **Mass Melee:** Sometimes referred to as a confused scramble or every Kithain for himself, mass melee pits foe

against foe with no ruling plan except beating the crap out of the other guy and surviving the fight. If your troupe likes wild and wooly free-for-alls, this is the style for you. Some players and Storytellers may be content to utilize cut-to scenes and focused descriptions, but for the die-hard strategist, we herewith present rules for mass combat.

Mass Combat Rules

Why provide intricate combat rules for a game that prides itself on roleplaying? Well, better we confuse and bamboozle you with unworkable, unwieldy and arbitrary "rules" calling for a degree in mathematics than have the individual Storyteller accused of favoring her foes to the detriment of clever, strategically savvy players. We also felt that as people who intensely dislike mass combat, we'd be more rigorous in applying rules to stop overkill. That said, we've tried to simplify things as much as possible when dealing with magic-capable foes who can access the Dreaming, pilot nocker-made battle machines and summon dangerous chimera. And that's not even counting their ability to fight with both ancient and modern weaponry and knock the competition out of the battle by making them forget who they are.

The system depends on counting up troop strengths. Count yours, count theirs and apply the casualties based on the difference between the two. What could be easier? Well, for one thing, casualties don't always tell the whole story. One commander may feel that a certain number of casualties are acceptable, while another surrenders if he loses even a few of his soldiers. Nonetheless, for a quick 'n' dirty system, this one is relatively easy.

We've divided up the opponents based on their relative strengths on the battlefield and assigned them a value.

Troop Values

Troops can be normal, elite, extraordinary or special, and each type has a different value. We use the word "unit" to mean a single individual, creature or craft.

- **Normal** troops are ordinary changelings, such as boggans, eshu or sluagh, who have no great facility on the battlefield. They have no particular skills that give them an edge in combat (i.e., they possess a brawl or melee of three or less). Normal troops each count as 1/10 of a troop, meaning a group of ten normal changelings counts as 1 point during a battle. Note that if your eshu just

happens to excel in battle and tactics, or your boggan is a noble who teaches knights how to joust, he is considered elite.

- **Elite** troops are those with natural weaponry, hardiness, or skill in fighting. They include redcaps, trolls, battle-trained sidhe and pooka who are dangerous in their animal forms (lions, scorpions, big cats, ferocious dogs, etc., not your regular cats and dogs and bunnies). Elite troops each count as 2/10 of a troop. Thus, five elite troops equal 1 point, and ten elite troops count as 2 points when determining the strength of troops. For mixed troops, some normal units and some elite ones, add the values to determine their overall strength. A unit with eight boggans and two redcaps (if you can imagine such a combination) is worth 8/10 (1/10 per boggan) plus 4/10 (2/10 per redcap). Adding these, you get 12/10, or 1.2 points. Sounds complicated, but if you're comparing it to one normal troop, the group with the redcaps wins by 2/10 of a point.

- **Extraordinary** refers to powerful chimera, nocker war machines and other such things (troops on flying carpets, airborne ships, etc.). Each extraordinary soldier, regardless of how many changelings may be in the troupe, counts as 1/2 a troop (or 5/10) all by herself. Thus two nocker-built tanks count as one troop, as do two chimerical dragons. Do remember that these things are hard to come by. Your local redcaps out to cause a ruckus at the baron's freehold aren't likely to have access to them at all, and even well-organized armies usually have only a couple to spare. They shouldn't appear at every skirmish, but should be saved for really big, decisive battles. Player characters are usually so much stronger and better armed than any Storyteller character that they belong in this category. Name NPCs belong here as well.

- **Special** troops are the *really* unexpected ones: inanimae who have joined one side and suddenly reveal themselves, Denizens who bring unknown powers to bear on the enemy, enchanted humans or kinain brought into the battle to wield weapons changelings cannot, even Dauntain pointed at enemies and loosed to wreak havoc. Again, consider sending an army of encyclopaedia, broom, magazine and life insurance salesmen to your foe's freehold to drown her in Banality. Because special troops are potentially hard to quantify, the Storyteller may assign a value to each depending on its ability to cause problems. The scale should range from 1/10 to 3/10. Then again, some of these (notably the sales personnel) probably

Unit Chart

Name	Value	Troop Value (value per 10 individuals)
Normal Unit	1/10	1 point
Elite Unit	2/10	2 points
Extraordinary Unit	5/10	5 points
Special Unit	1/10-3/10	1-3 points

won't be part of the battle, but harassment sent before or after it.

Casualties

Now that you have these spiffy numbers to work with, let's consider what they mean in terms of winning and losing battles. It's fairly obvious that a troop value of two beats a one, and that even 1.1 beats a plain 1-point value. But what does it mean? There are a few ways of figuring out how many units are lost on the losing side.

Method One: Two and Two Make Four

Compare the two troop strengths. The losing side has suffered casualties equal to twice the difference in troop strengths, rounded down. Thus, if Army A has 3.4 points while Army B has only 3 points, Army B has .4 fewer units. It would suffer .8 casualties. In a normal troop with a 1-point value, this would mean one casualty. If the difference were between 4.4 points and 3 points, for example, the losing side would be at minus 1.4 points. Doubled, this equals 2.8 and means the underdogs would lose two 1-point troops plus one normal unit. This might be 11 normal units or some combination that adds up to 11, such as one nocker assault cannon (worth 5/10), two redcaps (worth 2/10 each) and two mouse pooka. Just do the math. It's easy to see how useful elite and extraordinary troops can be. Even one troll may give a troop that extra tenth that puts it on the winning side. The main difficulty with this method is that it pretty much guarantees that the guy who brought the most troops or the fanciest battle wagon wins. To add insult to injury, the winning side doesn't suffer any casualties, either.

Note that casualties need not be deaths. They might represent someone who is captured by the opposition, knocked out and left to figure out who he is or injured too badly to continue. In some cases, the "casualty" might

even be a knight who surrenders and promises to quit the field.

Method Two: Care to Double That Bet?

You can add an element of chance to the battle by adding up troop strengths and then rolling a d10. Again, casualties are assigned by adding up the difference between scores. Those who don't want to run out of units quickly might consider not doubling the difference between the scores. On the other hand, fans of the gore-swathed battlefield look may want to increase the injured-captured-dead score by taking the doubled difference and multiplying it by a set number (say 10 or 20). Of course, each side may roll numbers that essentially result in no change or that really crush the smaller troop, but such are the tides of war. In any case, the operative system here is chance, a chance for the troops on the smaller side to win against the odds. There aren't any guarantees, and armies that consistently attack superior forces are eventually going to have their asses handed to them. Then again, player characters should never be among those casualties, no matter how the numbers are figured. Players tend to prefer controlling their own destiny rather than finding themselves victimized by a random roll or some preset determinant.

Method Three: Complicating the Numbers

Several other factors tend to complicate battles. They're rarely determined merely by troops strength. Factors that have an effect on the outcome should all be considered when running mass combats. Is one army inside a fortress? Does it hold the high ground? Is there such a thing as high ground when flying ships may overrun otherwise impregnable positioning? Some of the following factors (and probably many others Storytellers will add) can be used to change the odds or make them a little more (dare we say it?) realistic.

Factor	Plus or Minus to Score
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Advantageous Position:

Higher Ground	+1
Cover	+1
Fortification	+5
Mounted Troops	+1
Airborne Troops	+3
Ranged Weapons	+.2
Sneak Attack	+1.5
Unnoticed Reserve Troop	+1

Disadvantageous Position:

Lower Ground	-.5
In the Open	-1
Mounted, Unsuitable Terrain	-1.5

Other Factors:

Untested troops	-.3
Info on Opposition	+1.5
Knowledge of Terrain	+1
Experienced Commander	+.5
Treachery/Betrayal	-5

Note that a certain amount of common sense should come into play here. A small hillock shouldn't count as higher ground. It must be a significant rise such that the opposition is forced to attack uphill. Likewise, cover refers to walls, trees, hedges or a warehouse full of boxes, not a cartoonlike ducking behind a thin sapling where your head sticks out one side and your ass the other. Fortifications refer to actual defensive structures such as forts or castles, not to taking up arms and defending the local bar.

Since all changelings supposedly have access to magic, we give it nothing extra in affecting the battle one way or the other. Still, Storytellers and players should consider how cantrips, Glamour and access to the Dreaming might change combats. Will the Storyteller allow one sidhe with high levels of the Sovereign Art and the Scene and Fae Realms to force the other side to surrender? How do you break a siege or an attack that comes from both the Autumn World and the Dreaming? What about childlings? Should they be exposed to the war or sheltered from it? And if changeling is killing change-

ling, will there be anything left to claim when the bodies are counted, or will the Banality of the slaughter cause those taking part to lose their fae souls?

Personal Combat

In any game that features conflict, it's inevitable that sooner or later there will be an opportunity to fight one on one. Not all players feel comfortable with diplomacy or clever problem solving, but when the brawl or melee starts, each character finds her own place in it. Going toe-to-toe with the enemy, be it chimerical or all too real, provides a chance for everyone to make a difference. Combat monsters may duke it out up close and personal, while characters less physically oriented cast cantrips, but each one is involved in some sort of personal combat. When battle looms and the game features characters such as knights, personal combat should come to the fore. All too often, though, each character's single contribution gets lost in the overall picture. Three situations really call for the Storyteller to abandon the overview long enough to focus in on the small picture, making the characters involved the center of the conflict for as long as it takes to resolve it.

As always, characters should have the spotlight in the battle and should never become merely battle casualty statistics.

The Duel of Honor

While some believe that honor belongs to the Seelie fae, Unseelie may also find cause to engage in a duel. Honorable or not, few sidhe can resist the chance to fight one-on-one against a hated or respected foe. Certainly anyone insulting or unduly angering a sidhe noble may find herself facing the pointy end of that fae's sword. The same holds true for anyone attempting to bypass a troll's guardianship or a boggan's protected home.

The key to a good duel is to make it against someone the character truly hates or fears. Even better is the duel against a person the character deeply respects or loves but whom she must fight to maintain her honor, preserve her ideals or decide the outcome of a crucial battle. The beloved enemy presents great potential for roleplaying as well as combat.

This particular type of combat should be a showcase opportunity for the character involved. Note that the key word in all of this is character, singular, not characters. It seems as though most players cannot stand the thought of one character facing off against a foe without interfering in the duel. They want to cast cantrips to help

The Ever-Loaded Gun or Why Doesn't This Guy Ever Run Out of Ammo?

Ever watched a movie in which there are several gun battles and every gun seems to hold a zillion bullets? On the subject of running combats, there's a great debate concerning whether Storytellers should check on players and determine how much ammunition they have at any given time. Some feel that making their players account for the number of bullets/arrows/darts/small flying pooka they have gives an edge to the game by encouraging characters to use their ranged weapons only when it really counts. Others couldn't care less about the "details."

It's annoying when you actually know how many rounds gun X can fire before needing a reload when the NPC blithely keeps shooting at your character (who has carefully noted the shots fired and knows she has a chance to make a cool move without getting creamed). If the player complains, the Storyteller feels like a jerk and the momentum is broken. Roleplaying breaks down into an interminable argument or search through the books to locate how many rounds a gun holds, how many shots per turn can be fired, *etcetera ad nauseum*. So how do we resolve the issue between the obsessive bean counters and the flighty free spirits? We suggest the following:

1. Look it all up before the game starts and figure out how many missiles, bullets and what have you can be loaded, carried or whatever. Assume player characters have three reloads for each gun they carry (it's a paranoia thing). Give NPCs two reloads, then count every shot fired. If both Storyteller and players aren't sick of it by the end of the first turn of combat, you may have a group that likes the minutiae of gaming. Make sure they also know how much weight they can carry, how many steps they can walk in a turn and whether they have to roll dice to see whether their heads fly off when they sneeze (for those who take botches *really* seriously).

2. Don't bother counting bullets. How many does everyone have? Well, it's a subjective thing: PCs and NPCs have as *many as they need to make the scene dramatic*. The point here is that this is roleplaying, and reducing it to a series of numbers ruins the mood. So the gun never runs out of ammo? So what?

their friend or whack the enemy over the head while he's concentrating on one opponent. It's almost always with good intentions that players have their characters step on another character's moment of glory, but in effect the intervention steps on a scene built around a single character. Duels aren't fought by groups. Ideally, the Storyteller plans scenes to feature each character so that everyone gets a turn. If the troupe contains impatient players, though, the Storyteller may have to stage duels in places where the other characters cannot possibly interfere.

Significant Melee in the Midst of Battle

This form of combat is more like staging a duel in the middle of the battlefield. It is the moment during the battle when King Arthur clashes with Mordred, that climactic scene when the marshal faces down the outlaw in a gunfight or the final confrontation between Robin Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham. It has a special meaning for others besides the character because it's fought when the outcome of the battle may hang in the balance, and its aftermath may affect the future. This scene should be as carefully staged as a regular duel. Yet it should also include some incidental difficulties, such as bodies littering the field, other combatants nearby who might take a cut at the hero as he passes or enemy troops who may actually come to the aid of the foe. While not strictly a one-person-show, as is the duel of honor, the significant melee can make for a terrific element in a battle scene and gives the foe a chance to escape to fight another day.

The Unforeseen Enemy

The unforeseen enemy presents some tricky problems. There are several kinds of scenarios. The unforeseen enemy may be a foe who escaped a past confrontation and now returns unexpectedly. He may be someone the characters were completely unaware of who suddenly makes his presence known. Alternatively, the enemy may be a former friend (or someone who presented himself as an ally) who now turns on the character(s) at a most inopportune time. Confronting such a foe often gives characters (and their players) a great deal of satisfaction. Once the character gains the upper hand against someone like this, however, the Storyteller shouldn't count on the foe escaping or living to fight another day. Vengeance is a heady sauce to those who've suffered at the hands of the unforeseen enemy.

Dirty Pool: An Eshu's Primer on Sabotage

"So, you have problems playing dirty? Not honorable enough for ya? Well, m'dear, sometimes a stiletto in the back or a hit-and-run in the Dreaming is the only way to save lives, the only way to win. I felt the way you do once. That was before the Night of Iron Knives. Now I know the only true honor is protecting your own—in whatever way it takes. Yeah, I'm just an old grump now. You young punks don't believe me? See ya at the morgue, pal."

—Liandra Brokenblade, Unseelie troll

Such an eloquent speaker—for a troll! Nonetheless, Liandra has a point. For Kithain fighting at a disadvantage, sometimes playing dirty pool provides the only method to weaken powerful foes. Dark and evil practices considered unthinkable in peacetime have become common during the war. Detailed below are some of the most popular ways of "fucking with the enemy." It should be noted that some of the methods may cause those who use them to gain Banality. The Dreaming has ways of protecting its own. Still, hit-and-run tactics appeal to the wanderer spirit in me and, frankly, in this atmosphere I can't see how using creative methods of warfare should cause any more Banality than what's already happening. That said, let the games begin!

—Damius Tale-spinner, eshu traveler

Glamour Games

One of the most basic yet potent ways of distressing opponents is to damage or destroy their sources of Glamour or to provide tainted Glamour to them. Sources of Glamour just ripe for enemy action can include Dreamers, dross, treasures, chimera and even the Balefire within a freehold. Of these, the easiest target is usually the Dreamers.

Dreamers generally live outside freeholds and have lives that take them away from those who inspire them. Creative people are often sensitive enough that a talented "new friend" can subvert them. Convincing an artist that her muse is wrong or not attentive enough or that she is wasting herself on a minor work when she could be creating something else worthy of being called art for the ages is child's play for clever pooka or manipulative eshu. Lex Steeltooth, Redcap saboteur, recommends the following: "If ya can't wreck their loyalty or their faith in their patron, bring some friends over, throw a party and create your own Rhapsody in Blue—well, Ravage-sody in Blue anyway—with the Dreamer as guest of honor. By the next morning the source crashes out, maybe she's even drained dry. You

and your buds have a treasure or a buttload of Glamour to take home. And best of all, if you whisper the right words in the Dreamer's ear, Sir Ass-Too-High-to-Fart will have a bitter, suicidal, enraged artist greeting him (and hopefully gutting him) next time he shows up for a little dip in the old Glamour pool."

On the other hand, some pretty subtle moves are required to target a freehold's Balefire. As crippling as it might be to steal the Balefire from the enemy, that target is the most well guarded in changeling society. It's easier to infiltrate and weaken the enemy's defenses through second-hand means. Childlings often prove easy to fool and desperate to believe the best of others. Pooka also make useful dupes because of their ability to get others to talk and reveal secrets to them. These insiders can be valuable allies by providing information such as secret boltholes, enemy strengths and treasures kept in the freehold. And in the best of circumstances, they just might be able to steal some of those treasures—or the Balefire!

Potentially, the same childlings can be used to introduce tainted Glamour into the foes' freehold. Such Glamour, presented in the form of candy, flashy coins, toys and other small, portable objects, can attract childlings, who then bring them into the freehold. Tainted Glamour is most easily used to power destructive or negative cantrips, and those exposed to it tend to break things, steal personal items from others, trip people for the fun of it and perform other annoying actions. Further, the tainted Glamour seems to color those who use its attitudes as well, making them surly and uncooperative, jealous of things they don't have and likely to provoke fights. By providing tainted Glamour to childlings, foes at least can make life inside miserable for those who have to put up with the little hellions (who will not want to part with their precious toys!). At best, it may force the foes into making an enemy of the childlings by confiscating their treasures or driving them out of the freehold altogether. As Thiereni Balor notes, "Enraged children make fabulous shock troops. Just place them in the path of those who have harmed them and provide them with an iron knife or two. The carnage is amazing!" Just imagine the fun you can have—and the wreckage you can provoke—by hooking a redcap childling on tainted collectible cards!

Then again, childlings aren't the only naive changelings around. Wilders and even grumps can be tempted when they find a treasure apparently abandoned by a fleeing foe. They're usually quick to snatch it up and take it home. Someone with access to both the fuddle cantrip and the Time Realm might even make the treasure seem greater than it actually is, causing dissention among those who find it. Poisoned with tainted Glamour, one

otherwise ordinary sword could cause untold problems. Aside from bickering over ownership of the thing, the one who ends up with it may want to use it in battle. Of course, he may also find himself goaded into battle against his own allies as the taint makes him more likely to strike out in anger against any perceived threat or obstacle and the fuddle confuses his sense of what is transpiring around him.

Another version of this trick is to let rumor of a weakly defended Glamour-filled treasury reach your opponents. Let them raid the treasury and carry off the dross and treasures after a token resistance. The "treasures" should consist of a few minor bits of dross, a real (though unimportant) treasure and a selection of tainted or cursed items. Make them really *useful* items and watch the fun when they fail at a crucial time or gradually change the attitude of your opponent, poisoning him with tainted Glamour.

Chimera and Other Beasties

Some chimera are all but untouchable, such as a knight's chimerical armor and weaponry (though there are exceptions). Chimerical beasts and companions prove a little more vulnerable. Just as some fae have chimera hunts for fun or fight to protect their homes from dangerous rogue chimera, enemies can target a freehold's or an individual's friendly chimerical guardians or pets. The most heartless foes capture chimera, then torture them to death, skimming off the tainted Glamour this produces for later use.

Summoning chimera to harass or attack opponents can produce great results, especially when they are unleashed in a surprise attack. Since chimera can have very different abilities and unique looks, an innocuous-looking one may disarm a foe by approaching in a friendly manner, then suddenly evincing dangerous reds or nasty teeth and claws. It's even better when such a chimera can be introduced into an enemy freehold and have the inhabitants come to trust it, then receive the command to attack. Finally, some chimera are so appealing or seductive that they can almost ensorcell those they meet. A chimera like this whose loyalty lies with you can do untold damage to your foes by diverting them from their duties to spend time with the chimera. The chimera is then also in the perfect position to learn secrets, steal treasures or even backstab its fae paramour when the chance presents itself.

Others may become unwitting assistants, pestering enemy troops or, even better, making them lose their fae identities. Autumn People make fabulous allies so long as you can manage to elude their deadening effect yourself.

Take that sweet, little old lady whose only thoughts involve yapping dogs and her varied illnesses and complaints. Finding out what she's interested in (dog clothes? a panel on arthritis medication?) and inviting her to a special occasion to discuss it pays off handsomely when you tell her the meeting is in your enemy's freehold. Just turning her away from the door may prove more difficult than battling chimerical dragons, and it's likely to Banalize the poor door warden. In like manner, but more dangerously, Dauntain might be led right to your opponent, either at her freehold or at a favored spot for gaining Glamour. A few well-placed clues can set the Dauntain on your foe's trail, but those who choose this method should be very careful to cover themselves so that they don't attract the Dauntain's attention.

As Filandra Darklight, sluagh tactician, whispers, "A careful word here, an enticing hint there. Subtlety is the most useful weapon we have. Lead your foe's foe to him, then hide and watch the floor show. A quiet laugh at your enemy's death feels better to me than all the bragging of overly-loud posturing warriors."

Dreaming Dares

Trods can become vitally important in the game of dirty pool. Creative use of trods can win a battle, unseat or injure your opponents or provide a haven when you desperately need it. You can use trods as hiding places for troops poised to attack freeholds or enemy forces, bringing them through into the Autumn World in a surprise maneuver. Conversely, the trod can be held in reserve to provide an escape route for your own troops if they're losing. Capturing an enemy's trods can be devastating both as a blow to his morale and a possible "in" to his freehold or other important location. Trapping trods and luring pursuers to chase you also provides amusement, as does leading them into a pack of Fell (it pays to have Balor allies) or other dangerous creatures of the Dreaming. It has even been whispered (though the method is unexplained) that trods can be cut or destroyed; doing so could certainly cripple your foes.

Arkadillia Whisker claims, "It's the most fun in the world to lure some uppity-up onto a trod, mess with his mind and fuddle him up so he doesn't realize it when you lead him off the silver path and onto an illusion of one, then strand him in the Dreaming!"

Then again, Arkadillia is a pooka, so her claims may be no more than pooka speak. Nonetheless, it's certainly food for thought. Anyone who doesn't yet understand the value of playing dirty pool or knowing how to defend herself from it deserves a pool cue lodged in an inconvenient place.

Sides and Factions: or Who's Who and Who's Fighting Who?

The war raging across Concordia isn't an easily understood, cut-and-dried affair pitting one side against another. It isn't the Accordance War, in which noble fought commoner and everyone knew which side she was on. In the War of Dreams, nobles clash with commoners and one another, commoners fight other commoners and each may battle the Adhene or the nunnehi. Changelings who face one another across a battlefield one day may find common cause the next. While every possible permutation isn't presented here, the following are some ideas of the various conflicts occurring among the changelings caught up in the aftermath of the High King's disappearance.

Even if your own troupe's personal history doesn't encompass most of these conflicts, the fact that the disputes are occurring all around the characters should have an effect on them. Freeholds that once welcomed the characters may now view them with suspicion. Others may woo them so they can use them as defenders. Characters could be caught in the middle of a clash between two sides—each of whom once counted the characters as friends or allies and expects their support against the "foes." Whether Storytellers use a lot of the possible conflicts or only a few, the dislocations and hatred generated by the ongoing war poison the atmosphere around all changelings. Glamour is hard to find, and Banality gains an ever-greater foothold while the war continues. Directly involved or not, characters will feel at least some of that.

Nobles Versus Nobles

While some of these conflicts undoubtedly stem from personal animosity (creating great opportunities for duels of honor), others involve large numbers of opponents. Seelie versus Unseelie provides an obvious example of noble opposition, but either or both of them might also conflict with the Shadow Court or other extremist factions. Modernists vie with Traditionalists at the best of times; during the war, they might actually come to blows over their differences. Noble house could

fight house. There is an unequal distribution of freeholds, as any Unseelie house or member of House Liam knows. Those who have freeholds might actively persecute the have-nots, fearing that the upheavals could cause their own downfall or that those without freeholds might attempt to take them by force. In the wake of forcing commoners and those nobles suspected of disloyalty to swear binding oaths, many nobles have gone rogue, become Unseelie or joined the Shadow Court to avoid having their freedom curbed. With the arrival of several new noble houses and the return of most of the Scathach, competition for already scarce Glamour and freeholds reaches unbelievably fierce levels.

Most commonly, the nobles split into factions. Some favor High Queen Faerilyth's claim; others believe Morwyn should now rule. Lenore has her supporters, as does Queen Mab. Smaller (but growing) factions follow a new leader called Danwyn or lesser lights seeking advancement in a time of turmoil. Finally, in at least one case, the conflict has reached a kingdom-wide scale, with nobles from the Kingdom of the Burning Sun forcefully turning back both refugees and fighting troops attempting to cross their territory or exploit their resources. Though nobles are not the only ones involved in this policing action, they remain in the forefront of any battles other than simple border skirmishes.

Nobles Versus Commoners

Noble versus commoner battles contain uncomfortable echoes of the Accordance War. In many cases, changelings left bitter when the earlier fighting stopped see the disappearance of David Ardry as their chance to redress old grievances and win their freedom from sidhe oppression. Other, younger commoners feel that the war gives them the chance to make their martial talents known. Once again, each faction boasts adherents among commoners, many of whom are only too happy to square off against nobles supporting other candidates. Many commoners also support the idea of elevating a commoner to overall rulership of Concordia, though no single candidate has emerged to consolidate their efforts. And while the Seelie-Unseelie conflict remains as important among commoners as it does among nobles, the Shadow Court has made great strides in recruiting disaffected commoners and pitting them against other nobles. Ironically, some commoners find themselves at odds with

nobles through their associations with them: Commoners sworn to or adopted into noble houses find themselves fighting to preserve those houses against their enemies. Even more strangely, commoners under the protection of certain nobles or houses are facing the enmity of those nobles' rivals.

Commoners Versus Commoners

If anything in the War of Dreams points to its difference from the Accordance War, it's the preponderance of battles pitting commoners against other commoners. Aside from those who support a particular faction—Morwynists, Anarchists, Common Rights Activists or whatever—some commoners take this chance to just run wild. Redcap bands patrol some areas, bullying whoever comes their way. Some of the more aggressive pooka seize the opportunity to prove they're more than just foolish pranksters and liars. A few commoners divide into types, with redcaps battling sluagh, nockers or trolls and boggans savagely defending their homes from anyone trying to harm them. Additionally, many commoners have joined the Shadow Court, believing that their interests will only be reflected in a complete break from both the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. All too often this puts them at odds with other commoners who feel their counterparts are just being used. A few commoner leaders have emerged, commanding troops of commoner warriors sworn to elevate their captain to a position of rulership. While most pit themselves against nobles, some clash with other groups as determined as they are to seize freeholds and titles for themselves.

Other Combatants

Commoners and nobles alike tend to think of themselves as the "important" fae in the world. Most often they ignore the nunnehi and inanimae, not thinking, or perhaps not caring, what effect the war has on them. Few changelings even know of the Adhene, and even fewer consider how the Denizens might impact their lives and the war. Despite the warning given by the arrival of the Adhene in the Autumn World, no changelings other than the Denizens and newly returned noble houses have any concept that some of the conflicts can be laid at the door of the awakening Fomorian Courts.

Nunnehi

Some nunnehi have sworn pacts with certain changelings—mostly nobles occupying freeholds near nunnehi camps—and while these usually feature nonaggression, a few promise support against enemies. Thus, changelings battling pact holders may find themselves facing fierce nunnehi warriors as well. Some nunnehi provide other assistance, such as bringing wounded allies back to their camps for healing or leading enemies on a wild goose chase while helping "friendlies" to escape from overwhelming forces. A very few nunnehi, concerned that the conflict is spilling over onto their lands and poisoning their medicine, have offered their services as neutral arbitration. Such helpfulness is more the exception than the norm, however. Most nunnehi bitterly resent changelings' encroachments on their territories and the stealing of lands they consider their own. Thus, the nunnehi often spy on conflicts between changelings, then pick off the weakened victors. Knowing which sort of nunnehi they are dealing with might save many changelings confronted by nunnehi war parties; sadly, most changelings have ignored the nunnehi too often to now understand the difference.

Denizens

No one except the Adhene know what the Denizens want or how they plan to get it. Individual Denizens may support specific changelings, or groups may try to undermine freeholders. In some cases, they might want nothing more than to understand the Autumn World, but what concerns anyone who recalls the Fomorian threat is that they may be the harbingers of those dread beings. Interestingly, Denizens also fight among themselves, bringing enmities from the Dreaming into their lives here.

Fomorians

"No one ever expects the Spanish Inquisition," and no one expects the Fomorians to be a real threat. Most changelings are too caught up in the conflict itself to question what role, if any, the ancient Fomorian Courts might play in the war. Only the best informed and most paranoid fae suspect that the Fomorians might have a hand in fomenting the troubles assailing Concordia. Those few ask themselves who the Fomorians' agents are and what plans they have for freeing their still-imprisoned masters. Such questions have little chance of being answered while the battles rage... and perhaps that's just what the Fomorians want.



*It was then that we stepped out of our world
machine*

Between the palm and fingers

Peeling like gloves

And for each eye that shed one tear,

We made of that tear an ocean

And in the five directions

We loosed our several craft.

—Incredible String Band, "Creation"

Merits and Flaws

The state of war in Concordia imposes some unique conditions upon many fae. Some of these work to the advantage of changeling characters, while others create distinct disadvantages. Storytellers may decide that some of the Merits and Flaws listed below are not appropriate for their chronicles or may prefer to design their own.

Commanding Voice (1 pt. Physical Merit)

You have the ability to make yourself heard over long distances or above a crowd without appearing to shout. This natural projection serves you well in shouting orders on a battlefield, getting a room to quiet down or calling for aid from reinforcements. Your intended audience

automatically hears you regardless of the general noise level.

Crack Shot (2 pt. Aptitude Merit)

No matter what you're pointing, gun, arrow or dart, you hit your target with great accuracy. You receive no increased difficulty when targeting any specific location. You gain one extra dice on Firearms rolls that do not involve specific targeting.

Boon of Fate (1-5 pt. Supernatural Merit)

Although you know you are not immortal, you have been given the knowledge that you will not die from one certain means or event. Perhaps an eshu grump read your fortune in the stars and prophesied that you would not die

by the hand of commoner or noble. Perhaps you simply have a deep and abiding fearlessness of fire and the inherent knowledge that your death will not come from that element. Whatever your certainty, this knowledge gives you the freedom to risk your life in ways that others can not. Storytellers should keep in mind, however, that such beliefs can turn upon those who abuse this freedom. The individual who knows she will not die from fire can still perish from the collapse of a burning roof upon her head. Storytellers should determine the cost of this Merit according to the type of "death" it precludes.

Divided Loyalties (3 pt. Social Flaw)

The current hostilities have placed you in an awkward position with regard to your usual loyalties. A commoner who opposes violent revolt against the rulers of Concordia may find herself distanced from friends or oathmates who support the war. Similarly, a sidhe who sides with the commoners may alienate herself from other members of her house. A Red Branch knight who supports Faerilyth may have difficulties in the presence of colleagues who belong to different factions in the search for a successor to the throne.

Those of your friends or allies who know of your differing loyalties no longer trust you with confidences. Some may even consider you an enemy or, at the very least, a liability. You might try to conceal your true feelings, but if you do, you run the risk of discovery by those who would label you a traitor.

You suffer a +2 to your difficulty for all Social rolls in circumstances that place you and your erstwhile friends at odds with one another. At the Storyteller's discretion, possession of this Flaw may cause other problems that require solutions through roleplaying.

Oathtaken (4 pt. Supernatural Flaw)

You have submitted to the recent requirements that all commoners swear the Oath of Loyal Affirmation. This oath binds you to the service of your liege even if it places you in opposition to oathmates or other members of your motley. Your status as one of the Oathtaken also prevents you from joining any of the commoner war efforts, even if you sympathize with the rebels.

In order to take any action against the person to whom you swore the oath, you must attain three successes in a Willpower roll (difficulty 9). Even if you



succeed, all actions suffer a -2 penalty to your Dice Pool, and you may not use Glamour in conjunction with any such actions. Each time you successfully violate the spirit of the oath, you lose 1 point from each of your physical Attributes, subject to a minimum of one dot remaining in each Attribute. This loss remains until you receive a pardon from your liege.

An Arsenal of Arms

Chimerical armaments usually take the term of standard items such as swords, battle axes, crossbows, longbows and other familiar weapons. Both nockers and sidhe of House Dougal have learned the art of crafting chimerical firearms. Other, more unusual types of weapons, however, also offer alternatives to the usual fare. The following examples may spark your imagination in creating other items of destruction or mayhem.

Ferrous Wheel

These palm-sized discs, fashioned from wrought iron, are prized by knights of House Balor and their sworn vassals, who may use them without penalty. Tossed onto the battlefield, ferrous wheels cause one Health Level of aggravated damage to any changeling they strike. While a single wheel may not offer much of a threat, a volley of them can wreak havoc on an unsuspecting line of attackers.

Crackers (Level-Two Treasure)

Originally created as practical jokes, these miniature explosive devices now have a use on the battlefield. They come in four varieties named for the elements they mimic and resemble sticks of dynamite, complete with fuse. To activate the cracker, the user must light the fuse and throw the cracker toward the intended foe. A successful "hit" detonates the cracker and does damage by type, as follows:

Firecracker: This red-colored cracker explodes in a burst of flame and does 2 Health Levels of damage from fire.

Aircracker: This white-colored cracker detonates on contact and causes 1 Health Level of damage from a sudden burst of compressed air. The target may soak the damage but must also roll Dexterity + Athletics to remain on his feet.

Watercracker: This blue-colored cracker acts as a superpowerful water balloon. On contact, it bursts, showering its target with a cascade of water with the force of a fire hose. The water causes 1 Health Level of damage in

addition to potentially throwing the target off balance (see above).

Earthcracker: This green-colored cracker shatters upon contact, much [like a fragmentation grenade, doing 2 Health Levels of damage to its victim. If it hits the ground instead of an individual, anyone within a 5-foot radius must make a Dexterity + Athletics roll to remain on her feet.

Heather Bomb (Level-Four Treasure)

Physically resembling a hand grenade, this healing device uses the force of Primal Four in conjunction with Scene Five to conduct a form of mass healing at a distance. The user must spend 1 point of Glamour to invoke the properties of this treasure before tossing it toward the group she wishes to affect. Each Heather Bomb has a 30-foot radius and heals up to three levels of damage (including aggravated damage) to everyone within its sphere.

Holly Grenade (Level-Four Treasure)

Like the Heather Bomb, this grenadelike object uses the force of Primal Four in addition to Scene Five. Instead of healing, however, the Holly Grenade has the effect of a Holly Strike and does three Health Levels of damage to everyone in a 30-foot radius.

Defender's Gateway (Singular Treasure)

This greatshield, 5 feet tall, deep green and embossed with a curving, silvery line, forms a moveable gateway to a trod. As a defense for gravely wounded soldiers or those caught as innocent bystanders in the midst of battle, it may be used only to provide retreat for those helpless or in need of succor. Setting the shield upon the ground and using a point of Glamour opens a trod that leads to a small, defensible homestead within the Dreaming. Defenders may then move the shield, keeping enemies from following within. No one may stay within the homestead for more than the turning of one day or night. At the following dawn or sunset those within who have not since returned will find themselves at a gate in the Dreaming that opens to a spot exactly one mile west of where they entered the shield. Anyone cowardly enough to try to enter the gateway without true need will find his way blocked.

Once said to belong to Sir Edgravain ap Liam, a knight of great renown before the Shattering, this treasure has recently resurfaced and appears at times of need. The Defender's Gateway does not remain with any one individual for more than two uses. After the second use,

it disappears, reappearing in the possession of another worthy individual.

Wonderments of War

Whether gifted with visions of the Dan soon to befall Concordia or simply driven by curiosity and imagination, nockers from several guilds have concocted transportation devices eminently suitable for the art of waging war. Ranging from underwater and amphibious vessels to ground and air vehicles, these marvelous machines have recently found their way into the hands of all the factions involved in the Concordian conflict. **Kithbook: Nockers** gives examples for several airborne vehicles as well as a singular war machine known as the *Ogre Hunter Mark III*.

Nockers do not monopolize technological creativity, however much they may lay claim to that distinction. Members of House Dougal also possess the desire to invent Glamour-driven mechanical constructs, including vehicles, weapons and other devices applicable for warfare.

Beginning characters may acquire chimerical vehicles with Background points in Chimera, subject to the permission of the Storyteller. Vehicles or devices intended to carry or support five people or fewer cost 3 points; those meant for five to ten individuals cost 4 points, and vehicles used for transporting more than ten people cost 5 points. Nockers or Dougal sidhe who have at least three dots in Craft may spend one less point in Backgrounds to purchase chimerical vehicles. Other characters must gain possession of these objects through roleplaying or, with the Storyteller's approval, during downtime with the expenditure of experience points equal to twice the initial Background point cost for beginning characters. As always, Storytellers should determine whether or not they want chimerical vehicles in the hands of their players and limit or increase availability accordingly.

All chimerical vehicles possess the following Traits, similar to those found in **Kithbook: Nockers** for airborne devices.

Stall (airships only): This is the minimum speed at which an airborne vehicle can travel without plummeting to the ground. Hot air balloons, which have the ability to hover, have a Stall speed of zero.

Cruise: The standard cruising speed for the vehicle.

Maximum: The maximum speed the vehicle can maintain for one turn.

Range: This figure represents the distance (in miles or knots) that the vessel can travel at normal speed on 1

point of Glamour. Some devices allow changelings to feed dross into "engines" (much like putting gas into a fuel tank). Maximum speeds halve the range for vehicles unless they are sailing with the wind or can otherwise make use of wind propulsion to minimize the expenditure of Glamour. Airborne vehicles that run out of Glamour with no alternate power source have the possibility of crashing unless a successful Pilot roll (difficulty 8) can prevent disaster and bring the vehicle to a safe emergency landing.

Maneuver: Each vehicle possesses a maneuverability factor from one to ten, which represents the difficulty of performing complex, nonstandard maneuvers.

Passengers: The maximum number of individuals able to ride in (or on) the vehicle. The actual number may vary according to the size of the passengers. Trolls count as two passengers, while boggans or nockers may be able to double up.

Armor: This figure indicates the number of points of armor, if any, possessed by the vehicle.

Health Levels: This represents the amount of damage sustainable by the vehicle. Penalties apply to dice rolls involving maneuvers.

Attack: This represents built-in offensive capabilities, where applicable, and does not affect weapons carried by passengers or brought on board the vessel. Ornithopters have built-in offensive capabilities that require a successful Dexterity + Ride roll to employ.

Look! Up in the Sky!

Nockers have worked hard to perfect their designs for two types of airborne vehicles, aether balloons and ornithopters. Although **Kithbook: Nockers** provides a full description of several types of each, complete with explanations of how they work, we have included a revised version of that information for players or Storytellers who may not have that supplement or who would prefer all their vital statistics in one place. Storytellers should use the guidelines suggested above to determine Background or experience point costs for airships.

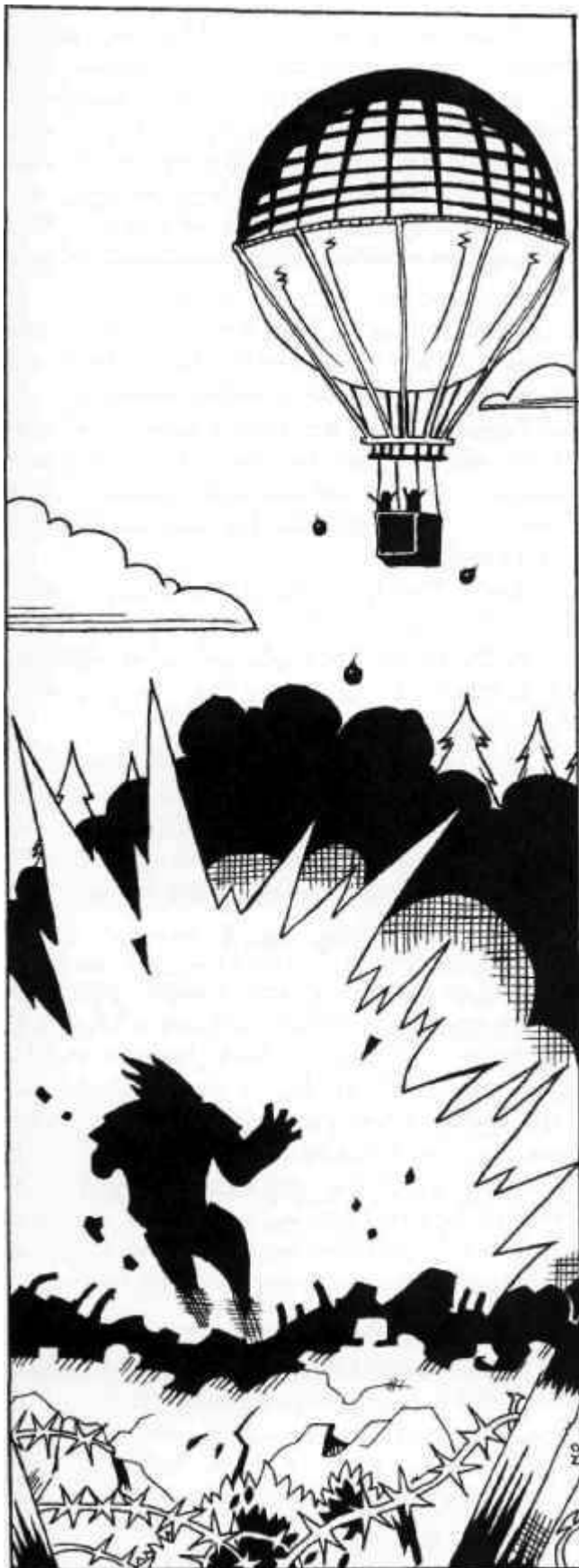
Personal Hot Air Balloon

Preferred by nocker pilots for aerial reconnaissance, these small hot air balloons carry their passengers in a suspended, gondola-sized carrier for no more than two passengers.

Stall: 0 mph

Cruise: Wind speed

Maximum: Wind speed



Range: 80

Maneuver: 8

Passengers: 2

Armor: Balloon 0, Gondola 2

Health Levels: Balloon OK, -5; Gondola OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -5

Squad Balloon

Used to transport small groups behind enemy lines, the squad balloon uses either gas or hot air above a suspended gondola and steam engine.

Stall: 0 mph

Cruise: Wind speed or 30 mph

Maximum: Wind speed or 40 mph

Range: 200

Maneuver: 7

Passengers: 5

Armor: Balloon 0, Gondola 2

Health Levels: Balloon OK, -2, -5; Gondola OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Small Airship

This blimp supports an enclosed gondola, internal ballonets and a complex steering system. It averages 100 feet long and 3.5 feet in diameter and serves to transport small groups across relatively secure territory.

Stall: 0 mph

Cruise: 40 mph

Maximum: 55 mph

Range: 250

Maneuver: 6

Passengers: 8

Armor: Balloon 1, Gondola 3

Health Levels: Balloon OK, -1, -2, -5; Gondola OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Medium-Size Air Transport

Able to carry up to twenty passengers, this air transport consists of a medium-sized, enclosed gondola made of semirigid material and including a frame that blends chimerical metal with aluminum and employs internal gas cells and a steering system. This vehicle is 253 feet long and 55 feet in diameter.

Stall: 0 mph

Cruise: 45 mph

Maximum: 70 mph

Range: 500

Maneuver: 7

Passengers: 20

Armor: Balloon 2, Gondola 4

Health Levels: Balloon OK, OK, -1, -2, -5; Gondola OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Air Maxivan

The largest chimerical airship resembles a zeppelin and boasts a massive enclosed gondola, a rigid frame crafted from aluminum, internal gas cells and a state-of-the-nocker-art steering system. At 430 feet long and 50 feet in diameter, this vehicle serves to transport as many as forty troops to the fight.

Stall: 0 mph

Cruise: 60 mph

Maximum: 80 mph

Range: 900

Maneuver: 8

Passengers: 40

Armor: Balloon 3, Gondola 5

Health Levels: Balloon OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5; Gondola OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Single Seat Ornithopter

Favored by skilled aviators in aerial dogfights, this ornithopter usually resembles a large eagle, condor or other airborne predator. Aboard this vehicle, the single pilot does it all.

Stall: 30 mph

Cruise: 60 mph

Maximum: 70 mph

Range: 45

Maneuver: 5

Passengers: 1

Armor: 1

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Talons, two dice; Bite, one dice

Dual-Passenger Combat 'Thopter

The favored design for this two-person ornithopter resembles a pegasus. Riders occupy front and rear positions, making this airship hard to attack successfully from behind. The senior pilot directs the vessel's aerial maneuvers while the co-pilot handles combat (via the powerful rear "kick") and conducts rear reconnaissance.

Stall: 45 mph

Cruise: 55 mph

Maximum: 65 mph

Range: 85

Maneuver: 6

Passengers: 2

Armor: 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Kick, six dice

Three-Person Airborne Fighter

Also known as the "fighting griffin," this three-person vehicle employs a dual attack controlled by the two junior pilots. The senior pilot directs the omithopter's maneuvers.

Stall: 45 mph

Cruise: 55 mph

Maximum: 75 mph

Range: 100

Maneuver: 7

Passengers: 7

Armor: 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Claw, four dice; Bite, five dice

Quad Fighter

The fabled roc forms the favored design for this four-person airborne fighter. In addition to a pilot and two combat specialists, this vehicle allows for a dedicated navigator.

Stall: 40 mph

Cruise: 65 mph

Maximum: 100 mph

Range: 200

Maneuver: 7

Passengers: 4

Armor: 4

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Talons, five dice; Bite, four dice

Five Point Flyer

The premier top-of-the-line ornithopter, this five-person flying machine usually resembles a dragon (albeit a small one). The crew of five allows for a pilot, navigator and three combat specialists, any of whom can switch to defensive maneuvers when necessary.

Stall: 90 mph

Cruise: 180 mph

Maximum: 230 mph

Range: 240

Maneuver: 8

Passengers: 6

Armor: 6

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Claws, five dice; Bite, eight dice

One if by Land

While the Shining Host shows a distinct preference for sweeping cavalry attacks and other forms of traditional feudal warfare, it does give grudging acknowledgement that the methods of battle have changed drastically. Commoners, on the other hand, know too well the foot soldiers'-eye view of combat and wholeheartedly appreciate the improvements in transport and weaponry that have come about during the six centuries of the Interregnum. Nocker-built tanks, armored personnel carriers and siege engines are in demand among all the factions involved in the war. Even some enterprising members of House Dougal have tried their hands at creating chimerical land vehicles for use by the nobility, who certainly have the available resources to spend on elaborate modes of travel. Although these machines differ somewhat in appearance from their counterparts of nocker make, they possess similar capabilities.

Storytellers should feel free to adapt the guidelines listed below as necessary for their own purposes.

Crawlers (Tanks)

Seeking a tactical edge to combat the use of mounted units in battle, nocker engineers (and some of their Dougal counterparts) have developed crawlers as a means of evening the odds against superior numbers or cavalry. Nocker crawlers often resemble mechanical versions of prehistoric creatures, armadillos or other fearsome land beasts. Tested by nocker ground troops in the later stages of the Accordance War, early prototypes proved successful in large-scale ground maneuvers. Historians believe, in fact, that more intensive use of crawlers might have brought about a different resolution to the war.

Crawlers fashioned by Dougal builders seem slightly more graceful in appearance, imitating wingless dragons or war elephants. A crawler's crew rides entirely within the construction, with the exception of the turret gunner, who gains only partial protection from his armored seat atop the vehicle.

Cruise: 20 mph

Maximum: 30 mph

Range: 50

Maneuver: 7

Passengers: 5 maximum (one driver and up to four gunners)

Armor: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Mounted guns (4), four dice each

Troop Transport

Rapid deployment of troops often proved the key factor in military actions during the Accordance War. While the Shining Host often relied upon the swiftness of its mounted knights, commoners found themselves relegated to slogging through hostile terrain without benefit of speedy transport. Since the end of the war, secret nocker factories have labored to produce reliable transportation for ground troops, "just in case."

Designed to carry groups of soldiers onto the field of battle, troop transports provide ample armor but do not possess built-in weaponry. Nocker-built vehicles resemble gargantuan creatures from science fiction films or huge mechanical insects such as tarantulas or centipedes. Troops ride within the vehicles, which usually have doors on the sides and at the rear for rapid disembarking.

The sidhe have not ignored the possibilities inherent in mass transport. Sidhe designers favor elaborate armored coaches pulled by chimerical horses, though sometimes they, too, adopt the imagery of great beasts, particularly dragons.

Cruise: 50 mph

Maximum: 75 mph

Range: 100

Maneuver: 7

Passengers: Up to fifty troops, depending on the size of the vehicle

Armor: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: None

Siege Machines

Both nocker and sidhe fabricators of siege machines pull out all the stops in their designs for these immense traveling fortresses of destruction. Nockers have produced nightmarish towers of gleaming chimerical metal. Many of their devices brandish hideous carving weapons such as scythes as well as energy cannons and other nocker inventions. Sidhe siege machines more often mirror their medieval counterparts, though much more elaborately. Chimerical ballistas, catapults and battering rams form the primary weaponry for these mechanisms.

In addition to the troops who may ride within the machines themselves, additional foot soldiers or cavalry usually form an auxiliary force that travels alongside or behind the siege machines.

Cruise: 5 mph

Maximum: 10 mph

Range: 50

Maneuver: 8

Passengers: Varies depending on the size of the construct

Armor: 8

Health Levels: OK,OK.OK, OK,OK, -1,-1, -1,-1, -1,-2,-2,-2,-2,-5

Attack: Varies according to weapons

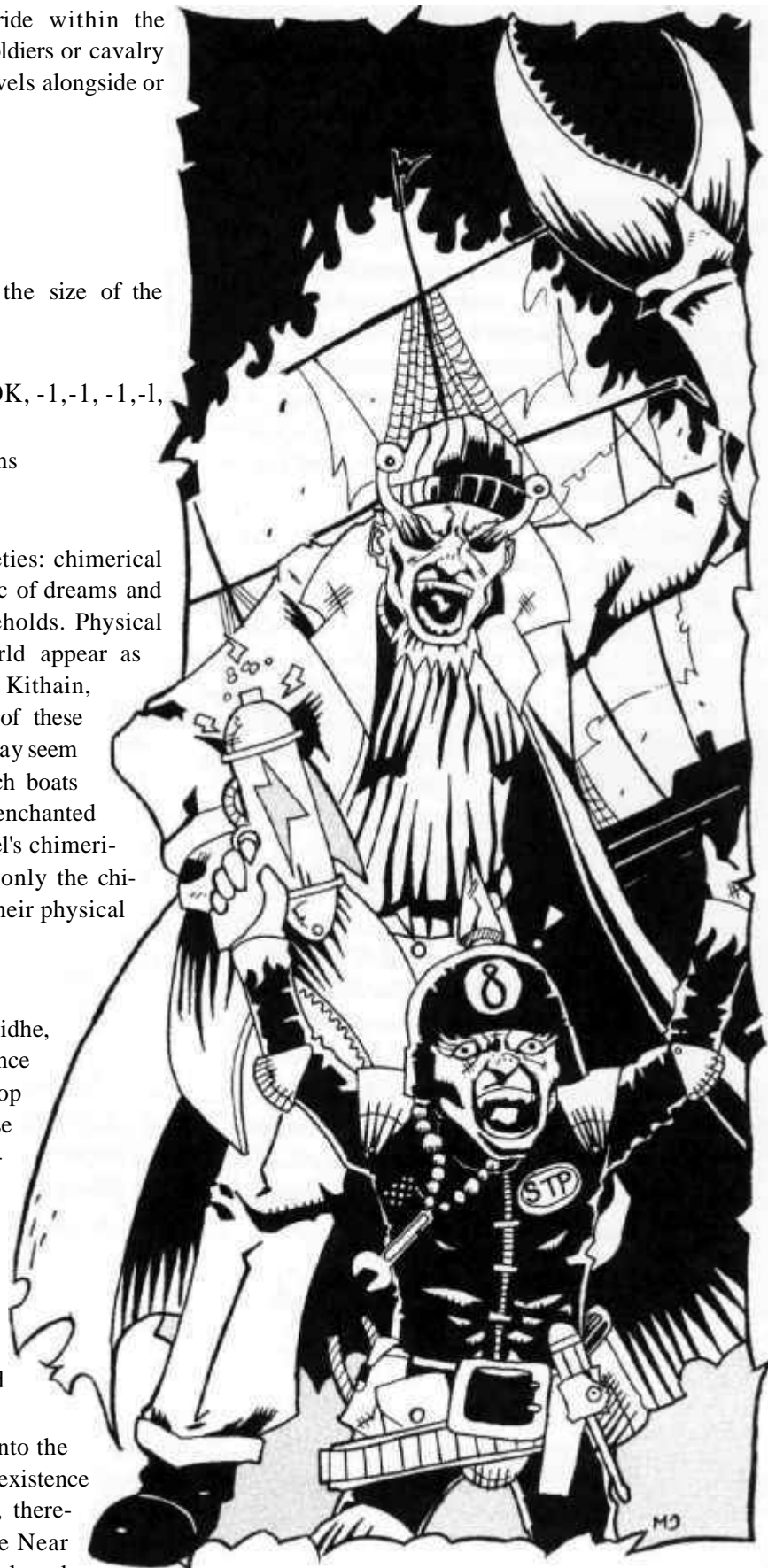
... And Two if by Sea

Changeling ships come in two varieties: chimerical creations made entirely out of the fabric of dreams and physical vessels that act as floating freeholds. Physical ships that function in the mortal world appear as normal ships to unenchanted viewers. Kithain, however, see the chimerical essence of these vessels. A pleasure yacht, for example, may seem no different from a thousand other such boats until viewed by a changeling or an enchanted mortal, whose fae sight reveals the vessel's chimerical aspects. Chimerical damage affects only the chimerical reality of these ships, leaving their physical substance unharmed.

Seagoing Vessels

Whether built by nockers or Dougal sidhe, chimerical ships vary widely in appearance as well as function. Designed to travel atop the surface of the water, many of these vessels resemble more fanciful or idealized versions of their real-world counterparts, Spanish galleons, Yankee clipper ships and Levantine war galleys ply the coastal waters and travel great distances via sea trods. Others depart from the "ship" shape entirely, taking on the appearance of swan boats, sea dragons and various other creatures.

Chimerical ships seldom venture into the deep ocean, since they have no physical existence outside the Dreaming. Most sea battles, therefore, take place either wholly within the Near Dreaming, far away from the eyes of mortals and



within reach of "dry land," or else between vessels that have some physical counterpart in the real world.

The following list of chimerical vessels does not cover all the possible variations. Storytellers and players should feel free to create their own ships to suit their chronicles.

Small Craft

Designed to carry one or two people, these vessels include canoes, dories, rowboats, kayaks and single-passenger sailboats. Nocker builders fashion these in the form of elaborate mechanical creatures such as alligators, porpoises or geese. Dougal engineers tend to spend more time on creating graceful versions of the real-world prototypes or historical recreations of vessels such as coracles or bark skin canoes.

Cruise: 8 knots

Maximum: 10 knots

Range: 20

Maneuver: 6

Passengers: 2

Armor: 1

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -2, -5

Attack: None

Midsize Vessels

Intended for carrying small groups of passengers, such as a motley or a single military unit, these vessels include small sailboats, pleasure yachts, cruisers and long ships. These ships frequently appear as mechanical sea monsters of medium size or large sea creatures such as sharks. Sidhe builders prefer the elegance of swan boats or gondolas.

Cruise: 10 knots

Maximum: 15 knots

Range: 30

Maneuver: 7

Passengers: 15

Armor: 2-3

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Ram, three dice

Large Ships

These massive vessels possess the capability to move sizeable groups from place to place. Nocker shipwrights pride themselves in creating gargantuan mechanical leviathans or huge aquatic dinosaurs. Sidhe designs tend toward fearsome sea dragons or more fanciful versions of clipper ships or other large sailing vessels. Pirate ships and galleons also fall into this category.

Cruise: 15 knots

Maximum: 25 knots

Range: 40

Maneuver: 8

Passengers: 15-100, depending on the size of the vessel

Armor: 4-6

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5

Attack: Ram, five dice

Submersibles

Nockers claim that Jules Verne borrowed the idea of submersible vessels from them, and many nocker-built submarines bear the unmistakable stamp of Captain Nemo's *Nautilus*. These odd-looking underwater crafts rarely carry more than a handful of passengers, since the dangers of travel beneath the surface of the ocean make mass transport risky at best. Most chimerical submarines serve as spy vehicles, though a few are capable of launching underwater attacks.

Cruise: 8 knots

Maximum: 10 knots

Range: 30

Maneuver: 6

Passengers: 1-5

Armor: 3-4

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -5

Attack: Torpedos, 4 dice

Betwixt and Between

Nockers pride themselves on their ingenuity and practicality in creating devices that serve useful functions while simultaneously showing off the imaginations of their creators. The following chimerical creations illustrate a few examples of unusual nocker technology.

Amphibious Vehicles

These vehicles possess the ability to travel overland and on the water. Small versions resemble mechanical alligators or crocodiles, while larger ones have the appearance of gigantic turtles. Amphibious vessels may carry troops across a variety of terrain, though they function best in the Near Dreaming. Needless to say, amphibious vehicles rarely venture into deep water, confining themselves to river or lake travel for the most part.

Cruise: 10 mph

Maximum: 15 mph

Range: 30

Maneuver: 9

Passengers: Varies according to size, but the maximum is usually 25 human-sized individuals

Armor: 6

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: None

Floating Bridges

These chimerical platforms allow passage across vast expanses of lakes or other bodies of water. Used primarily to circumvent the tried-and-true method of burning bridges to cut off an army's attack route, floating bridges come in varying sizes and degrees of collapsibility. Nocker bridges usually resemble elaborately designed modular tiles. Bridge technicians practice the art of linking the tiles to one another to form a pathway stretching across a span of water, as well as removing the tiles from the rear

to prevent unwanted pursuit. Nocker ingenuity has produced several other types of floating bridges. One of the most popular versions consists of a series of telescoping metal platforms. More fanciful but no less practical, Tarvin Murry's patented bridge of chain-linked, floating tortoises has proven useful in swamplands and marshes.

Bridges designed by Dougal sidhe may either resemble their nocker counterparts or draw their designs from natural objects such as lily pads, logs or carpets of seaweed. Some engineers have experimented with inflatable bridges, with marginal success, since inflation time precludes rapid deployment of the bridge in the event of a need to cross a body of water quickly.

Length: 1 mile per point of Glamour

Maneuver: 9

Armor: 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -2, -5

Subground Vehicles

Nockers' interests in mining have led their creative urges in the direction of underground transportation. Crafted to resemble mechanical worms, voles, shrews and other subterranean creatures, the plethora of underground vehicles available for troop movements lends an edge to surprise attacks by small units of fearless commoners. Though subsurface transports move relatively slowly and require frequent expenditures of Glamour to power their motion, they are nearly invisible to surface detectors.

Cruise: 5 mph

Maximum: 8 mph

Range: 10

Maneuver: 9

Passengers: Up to 20 per vehicle, depending on its size

Armor: 4

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Attack: None

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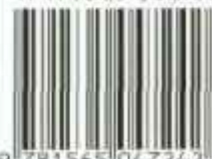


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